風波しのぎ
Kazanami Shinogi
THE NEW GATE
ザ・ニュー・ゲート
01.終わりと始まり
アルファポリス

THE NEW GATE

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01.終わりと始まり

Illustration:魔界の住民

「THE NEW GATE」 Terminology

● Stats

LV : Level

HP : Hit Points

MP : Magic Points

STR : Strength

VIT : Vitality

DEX : Dexterity

AGI : Agility

INT : Intelligence

LUC : Luck

● Distance / Weight

1 cemel = 1 cm

1 mel = 1 m

1 kemel = 1 km

1 gum = 1 g

1 kegum = 1 kg

● Currency

Jul (J) : Currency that's currently used. Didn't exist in the game.

Geyl (G) : Currency used in the game. Worth around 1 billion Jul.

Jul Copper Coin = 100J

Jul Silver Coin = 100 Jul Copper Coins = 10,000J

Jul Gold Coin = 100 Jul Silver Coins = 1,000,000J

Jul White Gold Coin = 100 Jul Gold Coins = 100,000,000J

● Main Race

Human : They have the largest population, and have a lot of countries.

Dragnil : Their STR and VIT is very high, and they have a long lifespan.

Beast : Second highest population. Very nimble. All tribes look different.

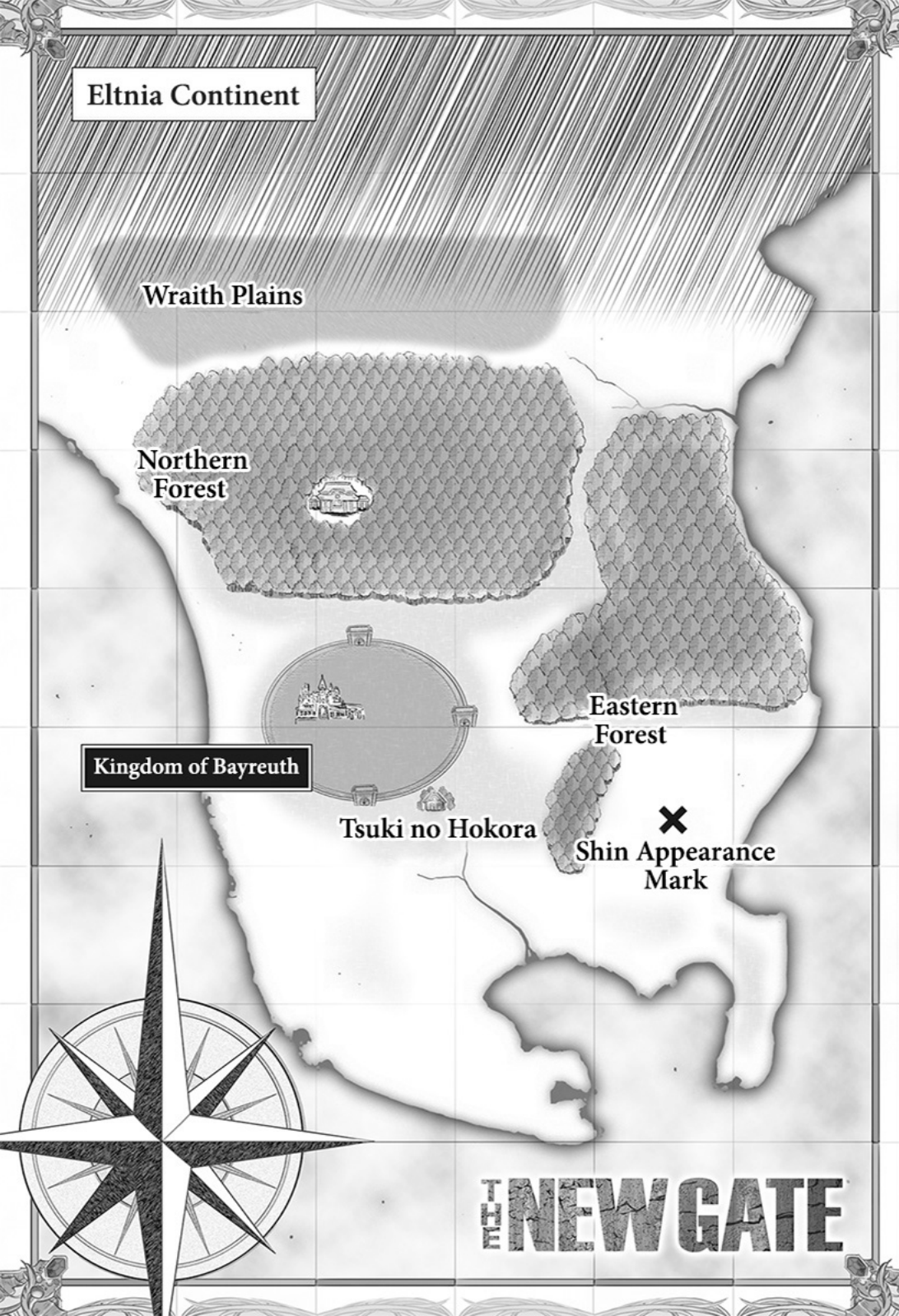
Lord : Similiar to Humans, but their stats tend to be higher.

Dwarf : Born with skillfull hands, good at making armour and tools.

Pixie : Highest lifespan of all races, and they excell at magic.

Elf : Second highest lifespan. High skill with magic. Good crisis perception. They live in the woods.

Barlux Heim
39 years old. Human.
Guild Master of Bayreuths Adventures' Guild.
Admired by everyone.
Cilica Lindt
(Younger Sister)
21 years old. Human.
Adventurers' Guild Receptionist.
She has a mischievous personality.
Celica Lindt
(Older Sister)
21 years old. Human.
Adventurers' Guild Receptionist.
Reliable older twin sister of Cilica.
Shin
Main character of this story.
21 years old. High Human.
Strongest player, renowned in online games.
After clearing the death game, he was transported to the game world 500 years later.
Wihelm Avis
22 years old. Lord.
An adventurer who wields the devil spear "Venom".
Has a strong sense of justice.
Tiera Lucent
157 years old. Elf.
A salesclerk of "General Store Tsuki no Hokora".
Hair turned black from a curse.
Millie
8 years old. Beast.
A girl with the features of a tiger.
Lives in the orphanage in town.
Main Characters
主な登場人物


Eltnia Continent
Wraith Plains
Northern Forest
Eastern Forest
Kingdom of Bayreuth
Tsuki no Hokora
Shin Appearance Mark
THE NEW GATE

Prologue

THE NEW GATE

The depths of the gate to another world【THE NEW GATE】

There, two figures were squaring off against each other.

One was the figure of a monster.
The name of the Gatekeeper{monster protecting the gate} was【Origin】, the very end of the VRMMORPG【THE NEW GATE】, and its strongest monster.
It was a humanoid dragon type, with a humanoid body, a dragon's head, wings, and a tail.
It's total length was roughly 20m. It's eyes were dyed a sky blue, and its horns and the scales that covered its body glittered golden. A golden armour also concealed a figure like that of a trained warrior. The unadorned spear it held was also golden.
Though its colour scheme could be very possible taken as ugly, but though you could feel a sublime divinity from its physique and overwhelming pressure, there was no hate.
It was no exaggeration to call it a divine beast, and could be said to be a monster worthy of the title 'strongest'.

The other figure was a person.
His name was Shin, and his real name was Kiritani Shinya.
A veteran player who held top class combat ability.
His height was a little over 180cm. If you had to choose between bulky or skinny, he'd be the latter.
Black hair and black eyes. Despite facing off Origin, from his plain face that could neither be called beautiful nor ugly, not a shred of nervousness could be felt.
Around his neck was a light muffler, black-coloured with red zigzags. What he was wearing was a long coat with pants of the same design. His arms and legs were wearing crimson tekkou and kyakkou, but besides those there wasn't anything else that resembled armour.
As for weapons, there was only the black katana in his right hand. Both the handle and the tsuba were black, but the blade alone faintly sparkled red, as though it had rubies mixed in.

Shin took a step forward. In response, Origin readied its guard. In contrast to Shin who seemingly wore no armour besides his arm and leg guards, Origin was armed and guarded from head to toe. From an

outsider's point of view, it was a sight that was the epitome of recklessness. You couldn't imagine anything except Origin turning Shin into a piece of meat with a single swing of its spear.

Once Shin took yet another step forward, Origin responded by thrusting its spear. With a speed unimaginable for its size, the attack with the spear was like a fast approaching wall.
The spear bore into the tiled floor. Where the point pierced the floor, not only were stone tiles sent flying, but the spear gouged even the floor beneath the tiles.

However, Shin's figure wasn't there.

Shin was by Origin's feet.
A moment before the attack, Shin had used the Support-Type Martial Skill【Shingan [mind's eye]】to predict the location of the attack, and furthermore relocated himself at high speeds with the Movement-Type Martial Skill【Shukuchi】[※].

Aiming for Origin's right leg, having left its sight, Shin activated the Toujutsu-Type Martial Skill【Kogetsusen [Arc Moon Flash]】.
Together with the activation of the skill, the blade of his katana started to glow red. For just an instant, the sharpness and speed of his attack was amplified by 1.5 times, and he slashed into Origin with all his might.

"Shii!"

A single yell and strike.
Leaving behind a bright red trail, the blade bisected the armour around Origin's right leg.
The blade continued and cut apart the leg about halfway up, and the flowing blood dyed its golden scales red.
Origin's HP gauge decreased by 1/50. Considering it was a single blow against the strongest monster, it was a shocking amount of damage.

"■■■■■■■■■■■■■――!!"

Origin let out a cry at the pain that assailed its leg.
A high pitched cry like the screeching of metal resounded through the room. Immediately reacting due to【Shingan】's attack prediction, Shin

swiftly made a big jump out of the way. The leg strength that had been strengthened to its limit made Shin fast enough that he left behind an afterimage.

Immediately after Shin moved, the butt of the spear smacked down like it was trying to crush the afterimage. Probably because it had weakened, there were fewer smashed tiles than last time. Even so, it goes without saying that even so, it was with force beyond the norm.

"How quick. As expected of the last boss."

Even seeing the fearsome strength of the spear, Shin had enough leisure to admire it. The final Gatekeeper. Filled with fighting spirit worthy of being an opponent.

Though Shin had a lot of leisure to spare, he was definitely not being careless.

If the HP gauge that floated in the corner of his vision emptied, he would die. Not only did he understand this, he had made it this far.

【THE NEW GATE】had been turned into a death game, it was for the sake of clearing it that Shin was here right now.

The comrades he had fought along with weren't here in the death game, but people who supported him were.
Almost all of the gear Shin was using were his own creations, and though the items he had been given were basically all useless in boss fights. Even so, the feelings of his allies that had supported them him with all their strength were important[heavy].

There was a girl who cried from missing her family. There was a boy who was at a loss having lost his older brother. There was a man who refused to lose, and challenged himself. There was a woman who would come running to help those who were troubled. All of them had struggled, given up, challenged, fought, and a number of them had disappeared.

It had ben a year since they had been trapped here. Shin wasn't sure if that was a long time, or a shrot time.

However, what filled Shin's heart right now was but one word――――

『Win』.

He'd defeat Origin, and he'd release those who had support him, and those who had pushed him forward, from this game.

It was *because* of this――――

"I'll take that head of yours!!"

Against Origin who glared over at him, Shin once again took a stance with his sword.

"Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!"

With a yell, his slash cut off Origin's wing from the base.

Toujutsu-Type Martial Skill【Hazan [Mountain Crusher]】.

It was a vigorous slash from above.
And, as the as the name suggested, it boasted enough power to cut a mountain; a massive 2.5 damage to enemies larger than oneself.

The one-winged Origin fell to its knees from the damage it had sustained.

Shin thought 'Alright!', in his mind. The cooldown from the skill was covered by the collapse of the opponent.

The armour that Origin was wearing was now broken and cracked all over.
Not only was one of its wings missing, but its left arm had been cut off, and even the tip of its golden horn was broken off.
Only a little HP remained in its HP gauge.

"Hahh, hahh, hahh."

Origin was wounded all over, but Shin wasn't uninjured either. His equipment durability was still okay, but he had repeated warded off the huge Origin's blows, repelled its blows, and occasionally blocked its blows.
Though his HP gauge was in the safety zone, he was mentally exhausted, so he was panting as though he really was tired.

"Hahh, hahh, suuuuuu haaaahhh..."

He breathed in, then out.

Even if it was needless because of the game system, to Shin, it was a necessary action.

As though to calm his anxious heart, he took control of his breathing.

With【Hazan】, he'd need only need one more hit to finish things, but the cooldown[delay time] for this skill was long. It was long enough that if not the longest, it had at least the second longest cooldown of all skills. He probably wouldn't be able to use it again in this fight.

(It's not so easy an opponent that it'll just take huge moves one after another, after all. But that's only one of my skills. There's no reason to worry.)

He didn't only have the high damage【Hazan】. If they lacked in quality, then he'd make up for it in quantity.

"Don't get hasty, me."

Though Origin had little HP left, it wasn't zero. If he got done in at the very end because he lost focus for a moment, it'd be terribly pathetic. [there should be limits to being pathetic]

There was still fighting spirit left in those eyes that stared at Shin. Though it should've been just graphics, that was what Shin felt.

Immediately afterwards, a monotonous female voice reached Shin's ears.

――――【Survival Instinct】Activate: Attack and Speed increased

――――【Golden Wave】Activate: HP, damaged parts, and broken armour, steadily recover

Shin's Autoskill,【Analysis – Ⅹ】*['analysis ten']* activated and let him know that Origin was reinforcing its abilities.

And at the same time, Origin's HP gauge began to recover just a little. At the subs of its lost arm and wing, a goldened light formed and grew just a little, slowly regenerating its arms and wing.

If he left Origin alone, at this rate it would return to its original status. Of course, Shin wouldn't.

At the same time he received the information from【Analysis Ⅹ】, Shin used【Shukuchi】to move, and came down hard on the still kneeling Origin.

"■■■■■■–!!"

In response to Shin's movement, Origin roared and at the same time mowed the spear in its right hand across.
GOU-!! rang the sound of the spear cutting through the air as it approached Shin.

Without a pause, Shin activated the Toujutsu-Type Martial Skill【Shirahanagashi [Drawn Sword Diversion]】and the Barehanded-Type Martial Skill【Steel Repel】.
Lowering his centre of gravity, using【Shiraha Nagashi】he blocked the spear with his katana, and shifting the top of the blade, he diverted the power of the spear strike away. On top of that, his right hand propped the blade, and using【Steel Repel】, he reduced the power of the spear.
However, because the strike was strengthened with【Survival Instinct】, Shin was unable to fully ward off the blow, and a little of his HP gauge was shaved off.

"Hu-!"

Whilst taking damage, the moment he part his blade from the spear, from his crouched position, Shin increased the power of the strike of the spear above him.
Because of that, the spear struck faster than Origin had intended, and as a result, Origin's posture was destroyed.

Shin immediately activated the Toujutsu-Type Martial Skill【Gekkou Zanmai [Moonlight Beheading Dance]】. Silver light like the light of the moon wrapped the blade katana, and took the form of a silver blade. The blade length would be temporarily extended by two times.

"Sehhhhyaaaaaah!"

The light blade struck into Origin's defenceless torso.

One!

Two!

Three!

Each time the blade swung with a speed that left afterimages, a trail of silver was drawn in the air. The three strikes had whittled away the amount of HP that【Golden Wave】had recovered.

Four!

Five!

Six!

Seven!

Eight!

Nine!

Ten!

The seven strikes that followed depleted Origin's remaining HP in one go.

The moment ten silver trails were etched into the air, the light disappeared from the blade, and let Shin know that the skill had completed.

【Gekkou Zanmai】was a skill that increased the attack speed and range for ten strikes. The speed of the attack would be increased 1.3 times, and the range by 2 times.

Though the damage given by one of the strikes wasn't that high, because of the increased range and number of strikes, the combined damage taken from the attack was greater than a simple power-increased skill.

Though it certainly didn't reach a【Hazan】that was performed with Shin's STR, weapons and attack power, it was able to deal damage close to it.

And truly, the intense attacks from the【Gekkou Zanmai】ten-strike combination left Origin's HP gauge with almost nothing left.

"This finishes it!!"

Shin ran up to Origin, who was collapsed from【Gekkou Zanmai】's damage. Even in this time, Origin's HP had recovered a little, but Shin judged that he would make it.

Perhaps as a final struggle, Origin's right hand let go of his spear, and let loose a backfist. Shin leapt over it, and set up a joudan guard in mid-air. [Note: Joudan no Kamae. Oberhut. Vom Dach.]

His eyes met with the collapsing Origin's. Despite the fact that this blow would truly spell the end for it, for some reason Shin felt not anger in its eyes, but a quiet calm.

However, even if he could feel no animosity from those eyes, the power in shin's blade didn't let up an inch.

Having decided on victory, his heart didn't waver.

"This is the end!"

Along with those words, Shin brought down his blade blade on Origin's forehead.

◆◆◆◆◆◆

――――『You have defeated Gatekeeper【Origin】. Accordingly, you will be given the boss defeating bonus.』

――――『You have gained Gift(s)【Limit Breaker】, 【Accomplished One】and【Liberator】.』

――――『You have learned Skill(s)【Wave of the Dark King】, 【Focus Wave】and【Scattered Wave】.』

――――『You have gained Items(s)【Corpse of the Guardian】, 【Soul of the Guardian】and【Heart of the Guardian】.』

[Note: First of all, 'gifts' are what would be called 'titles' in other games. The kanji says 'title', but in the light novel, the furigana reads 'gift'. Also, I have seen 臨界者(rinkaisha) used before in D. Gray Man as well, but the translators there couldn't find a good English equivalent either. In light of the rest of the series, will write it as 'Limit Breaker' for now. It more literally means something that has hit the critical point. Ah, also, Dark King (冥王) sort of equates to Pluto/Hades in a sense, esp. planet (冥王星).]

Hearing the voice of the announcer, Shin stood still.

The place filled with light.

Origin's body turned into light and scattered, and filled the room with light.
The light glittered for a few moments, and disappeared. After that, all that remained in the tattered room were an undamaged door, and Shin.

When the light faded, the announcer spoke again.

『The Gatekeeper of the Depths of the Gate to Another World, 【Origin】, has been defeated, and the dungeon has been cleared.』

It announced Shin's victory to his companions.

『Accordingly, all players are now able to log out.』

It let all the players that fought in THE NEW GATE know that they were released from the game.

"It's over..."

Right, it was over.
The death game they had been trapped in for a year was now over.
Just to be sure, Shin confirmed that at the very bottom of the menu, the【Log Out】command was certainly there.
Shin opened up his friends menu to see, and even at that moment, the names of the players were changing from【Online】to【Offline】.

It seemed that everyone was able to log out safely.

"I kept my promise. Right, Marino?"

His chest brimmed with a sense of accomplishment.
Would the girl who had *fallen in this world* have praised him?

So wondered Shin.

"Now then! Shall I wait to make sure everyone else has logged off?"

Deciding to stop thinking about the depressing, Shin switched his mood and sat down on the floor.
Shin had decided to make sure everyone else made it home before logging out himself.

Shin took out something like a rolled parchment from his item box; the Survivor's List, and quietly spread it. This list was an item that showed the names of the surviving players in real-time.
A companion alchemist who sympathised with Shin's thoughts had spent 7 days and 7 nights coming up with the item. If the player died, or otherwise logged out, their name would disappear from the list.
Whilst feeling grateful towards that alchemist friend, Shin continued to watch the list for a short while longer.

The time it took was roughly 3 minutes. Finally, the only name left on the list was【Shin】.

"I'm the last one, huh?"

He unconsciously let out those words.

While he was fighting, he did nothing but focus on what was ahead, but now that now that he was about to end things, it felt somehow deeply moving.

After logging out, he probably wouldn't return here again. For a game that had been turned into a death game to continue running; no matter how you thought about it, it was impossible.

(It ended up as a death game in the end, but excluding that, I really had a

lot of fun times with it.)

For Shin, the time he had spent playing THE NEW GATE actually equated to a 1/3 of his life. For better or worse, he had spent a long time in this game.

"Cya, THE NEW GATE."

Muttering words of farewell, Shin made to log out, but at that moment, the door before his eyes let out a groan.

"Mn?"

Preoccupied with the gate, the finger that made to touch the words Log Out, stopped.

The gorgeously decorated, and dignified doors were slowly opening with a groan. Light shone from the opened gap, and from where Shin was, it was impossible to tell what was happening beyond the doors.

"What's this? There shouldn't be anymore events..."

Shin was bewildered.
Besides Shin, the door continued to open, and the overflowing light dyed the room white.

"Something is wrong."

Feeling a sense of abnormality, a moment faster than Shin's finger managed to touch the words 'Log Out', the light filled the room.
As though swallowed by the light, Shin lost consciousness.

Chapter 1

THE NEW GATE

The first thing he felt was wind.
Shin's consciousness faintly grapshed the feeling of the warm wind blowing on his skin.
What he felt next was a hard sensation on his back, and faintly, a sweet smell tickled his nose.
Was the reason his sight was dark because his eyes were closed?

"Mmn..."

Shin opened his eyes as he sat up.
What spread across his field of vision was a broad meadow, dotted with tree groves.
White and pink flowers bloomed where Shin had been sleeping. It seems that what Shin smelled earlier were these flowers.

"This is..."

To solve the mystery of why he was here, Shin worked his mind.

(Today I fought Origin, the boss monster at the Depths of the Gate to Another World, and won. Right, I cleared THE NEW GATE. Because of that, we could log out, everyone was released, and in the end it was just me...)

Gradually, his mind became clear.
The scene Shin had seen at the end; that was,

"The doors... opened?"

Right, after defeating the final boss mosnter【Origin】, logging out became possible, and just as he was about to do so himself, the closed doors had opened, and he lost his consciousness.

"The heck was that? And this is..."

Even looking around again, what he say was a broad meadow, and groves of trees. There was nothing else he could find.

"Could it be, I'm still in the game?"

Shin wasn't sure whether or not he had managed to touch the words Log Out in the end. Wondering if only he hadn't logged out because of an event, he made sure by calling up the menu.

"...Oi, oi."

Translucent screen behind his eyes, and the menu items lined up there; it was unmistakably the menu screen of THE NEW GATE.

"What, I was still in the game?"

Man, that was shocking, thought Shin, as he brought his gaze down the menu.
There, the words Log Out were――

"...Gone."

The words Log Out that should have been between 'Owned Gold' and 'Help', were nowhere to be seen. The six letters that he had made sure were there when he had defeated Origin, had disappeared.

"Oioioi, this is a lie, right!?"

He opened up every menu item from start to finish, but as expected, the words Log Out were nowhere to be found.
It was like when it was a death game.

"Tch!! Right, what about everyone else!?"

Was there anyone else besides himself? Thinking about that possibility, Shin look out the Survivors List from his item box. If there was any other player left behind, the list would show it.

"What... the hell?"

The only one on the list was【Shin】, but below that in the white space,

――――『Cannot display due to lack of network connection.』

was written.

The Survivors List was a way of having the avatar that used the item, access the network of THE NEW GATE, and checking which players still survived, said his alchemist friend.
Considering that, it meant that at present, Shin's avatar was disconnected from THE NEW GATE's system.

"Can't connect to the network. Then why can I move my avatar?"

Even though he couldn't log out, he was connected to the system――― was something like that possible?

In this situation, Shin shouldn't have been able to move his avatar. It wasn't as though Shin was well-versed with VR technology, but at any rate, that was how THE NEW GATE worked. Thinking about it normally, being disconnected from the network, yet being able to move your avatar was contradictory.

"I don't get it. The heck is happening."

The feeling of relief he had up until a while ago had disappeared in one go, and Shin once again lay down on the ground.
He didn't feel like getting up, and he worked only his mind, but no matter how much he thought about it, he couldn't come up with an answer.

(It's no good, huh. In these situations, I should empty my mind for a little.)

It was Shin's way of calming down when the inside of his head was a mess. When there was something he couldn't understand, he'd temporarily let go of everything, and then rebuild this thoughts.

1. He couldn't connect to the network.
2. It was possible to manipulate his avatar.
3. The two points above were not reconcilable.

Number 1 could be confirmed through the Survivors List program, and the message that appeared on the list.

Number 2 was also confirmed since he was certainly moving his avatar. As for number 3, it was a reality that a network connection was essential for the act of moving ones avatar. There was no mistake that players who had lost connection to the network due to a bug found themselves unable to move their avatars.

Then, what would have to happen to reconcile these two facts――― what Shin came up with was this.

There was the possibility that the Survivors List had malfunctioned, and there really was a network connection. It wouldn't be strange for something like this to happen.
The next possibility was that he couldn't connect to the network, but it was possible to move his avatar. That kind of technology might ahve been developed.

"The last possibility would be that... Fantasy."

Shin smiled wryly at the thought that had by chance crossed his mind while he was thinking seriously.

Shin was a pure net-gamer. He was bad enough that his friends called him a net-game addict. And at the same time, he also reached out to anime, manga, light novels and web novels.
Stories where the protagonist ended up in a world exactly like the game had already become a staple for such fiction, and he had also read a number of these. The reasons for this were varied, but Shin had read many stories where they came to the world of the game with their menu intact.

What had come to mind just now was exactly that. He had suddenly wondered if the place he was in now wasn't the game, but the real world of THE NEW GAME.
Losing his network connection, and being able to move his avatar; both of these could be explained by it.

'As if', thought Shin. He decided to stop thinking for a while, and looked up at the sky. The wide blue sky filled his vision, and small clouds slowly moved by.
He could see the groves of trees in the corner of his eyes. Turning his sight that way, he could clearly see each leaf.

"....."

He could see them. He could see them clearly. He could see them distinctly.

He could see too much.

He could see more clearly that when it was a game. It was as though they were the real thing.

With the development of VR, certainly they could create a world that was the spitting image of the real one. Not only in sight and sounds, but it was possible in touch, and taste as well.
However... However possible it was to reproduce these things, technology still hadn't reached the level of the 'real thing' yet. Technology was only at a level where if you'd seen it in reality before, you'd know for sure that these were affected fakes. In the end, they were just pretty graphics.

However, what was reflected in Shin's eyes were the movements of clouds, the colour and gloss of leaves, the figures of flowers blooming in the field; all of this looked like nothing but the real thing.

"....."

Shin slowly held his own hand above his face. There were wrinkles and fingerprints that hadn't existed when it was a game.

"Is this... the real thing?"

After noticing this one thing, he started to understand things one after another. The scenery before his eyes, the rustle of the leaves, the feel of the wind on his skin, the smell that tickled his nose; all of these were different from how they felt in-game.

"After a death game, is a trip to another world..."

Shin experienced two VRMMO player urban legends in succession. Depending on the person, it might've been a delightful situation, but Shin was thinking that he'd have preferred some time in-between them. The only indication that he bore these thoughts that were pretty far off the norm, was his calm expression.

"Ahhhhhhhh... What the heck is going on~~?" lazily said Shin, as he rolled around on the ground.

Just where had the valiant figure from the fight with Origin gone?
On top of the fatigue from the fight with Origin, just when he thought he could log out, unbelievably he ended up on a trip to another world. At any rate, his mind sought rest.
If you had to describe it in one word, he was languid.
He was a little bit burned out as well, so for a while the feelings of wanting to take it easy filled Shin's heart.

"Ah~~~... Hahh...."

For a while he'd roll about as though he had reverted to infanthood or something, and then stop that, endlessly repeating the two. Little though it may have been, perhaps because he had abandoned the act of thinking for a while, his weariness had become somewhat better than before, and he began to think again.

The situation was filled with unknowns. There was nobody else around, so he couldn't gather even a little information. Still feeling a little heavy, whilst he sat up he considered what he'd do from now on.

(At any rate, I don't have enough information. For now, since the menu still appears, I'll check my status and items, and then shall I search for a place that would have people?)

Summoning the menu, he displayed the status menu.
On the left hand side was a 3D graphic that displayed the avatar that was Shin's other self, and on the right were entries like【Ability Points】, 【Equipment】, 【Gifts】, 【Skills】 and the like.

The displayed avatar had black hair and black irises, with no notable traits outside of some slightly sharp looking eyes; the face of a young man you could find anywhere.
The face on the avatar was Shin's real one, and because the physique was made to reflect that, though it was 180cm tall, it gave somewhat of a lanky impression. Shin's friend in real life who had been in an athletics club [at school/university] had always told him to train his body more.

When he made to confirm his【Equipment】, he found that they had changed a little since his fight with Origin, and his muffler, his arm guards, and his leg guards had been unequipped. What he still had equipped was the red-lined black long coat,【Overcoat of the Dark King】, the pants that had become a set with it, and accessories.
In the weapons column were the words【Shingetsu [True Moon]】. It seemed that his beloved and prided blade was in good shape.
When he checked his inventory, the equipment he had worn to fight Origin was in there. He had verified his items and money at the same time too, and it seemed there was no problems with his belongings.

Next was【Ability Points】.
Originally all stats except LUC were maxed out with 9s, and he prayed that he hadn't weakened.

＜能力値＞

◆ステータス◆

LV：２５５
（MAX：　２５５）

HP：２２８３２
（MAX：９９９９）

MP：２１３４９
（MAX：９９９９）

STR：２２２５
（MAX：　９９９）

VIT：２０１７
（MAX：　９９９）

DEX：２１７０
（MAX：　９９９）

AGI：２２３６
（MAX：　９９９）

INT：２０３２
（MAX：　９９９）

LUC：３６
（MAX：　　９９）

"...Nonono"

He looked away from the screen, and for a while gazed far away before returning to the screen.
There was no way that doing something like that would change what was being displayed before him.

"Hangon, just hangon!"

Once again, he looked away from the screen, and gazed into the distance. Furthermore, he rubbed his eyes, and then having made sure there was nothing blurry about his sight, he returned his gaze to the screen.
It was like he was in a frame of a manga where the character couldn't believe their eyes, Shin thought.

"...I didn't see wrong... huh?"

In the end, having looked upon it for the third time, Shin finally accepted that he hadn't seen *that* wrong.
The reason was simple; except for LUC, those ability points were very different from what his stats used to be.

The VVMMORPG【THE NEW GATE】was different to other MMORPGs, and if you spent a long time, you could raise every stat except LUC to the maximum.

Shin who had spent massive amount of time on it since the Closed-β days, on top of aiming for maximum hunting efficiency, and who would repeatedly use the rebirth[reincarnation] system, was the only player who had capped all stats.

There were other players who had almost maxed out, but none of them could reach Shin.

When it was a game, Shin's HP and MP were 9999, and besides LUC which was 36, all other attributes were 999.

The reason LUC was low was because on top of it having a cap of 99, it was determined and fixed from when the character was created.

But right now, all of Shin's statuses save for LUC were displayed as over double their original values.

"The game's specs have been... smashed by this..."

There was already nothing left he could do but be amazed.

The numerical values were too large, and right now he had no idea how great his own strength was.

"...As you'd think, I'm exhausted from the surprise..."

Because of all the surprises he'd had recently, he was sure that he looked hilarious, he thought mockingly about himself.
Even so, staring at the menu was unproductive, so for now he'd move on to other entries.

(There are things I've never seen before, huh.)

Looking at it from start to finish, he found out that new Gifts and Skills had been added.

The Gifts【Limit Breaker】,【Accomplished One】and【Liberator】, and the Skills【Wave of the Dark King】,【Focus Wave】and【Scattered Wave】had been added.

He should have heard it when he defeated Origin, but Shin had completely forgotten.

To find out what effects they had, he chose the three new Gifts from the menu.

【Limit Breaker】
With this power, you can exceed the limit.
The upper limit for all statuses has been removed. Statuses will rise according to how many ability points were discarded prior to limit removal.

【Accomplished One】
Blessings to the one who has reached the ends of Samsara.
The moment this Gift was received, all ability points were doubled.

【Liberator】
You are the hopes of those who have been imprisoned.
Acts of restriction and subordination are restricted. Forbidden magic, traps, items etc. are made invalid.

"...The heck?"

Every one of the Gifts he had gained were beyond expectations. Even Shin who knew of almost every Gift in the game didn't know of such balance-breaking Gifts.

It was fine that he had solved the mystery of his increased statuses, but these were basically cheats. They weren't even in the dimension of having a rare item, or starting on a high level.

...Having said that though, that LUC was still the same as ever (in accordance to the game's setting), it kind of felt like he was being mocked.

"Stories where they go from an MMO to another world usually have cheat characters but... this really feels like they're overdoing it, huh..."

Shin, whose original statuses could be called cheats, had been enough to demolish a group of max level Lv.255s once (a group of 12, with no rebirths). He was strong enough that when he killed them all, they screamed "You freaking cheater!" as they died.
Against players who had rebirthed dozens of times and almost capped their stats, even Shin wasn't undefeatable, but even so, he could fight on par with 4 of them at once. In the first place, players who fought with Shin head on were rare though.

Those stats had now been even further increased. As long as he didn't suffer an instant death from an ambush, in fights against people he probably couldn't lose anymore. Of course, this was assuming that there were other players in this world in the first place.

Whilst thinking about needless worries, Shin prayed that these titles weren't possessed by heaps of other people.

◆◆◆◆◆◆

After that, besides titles, Shin also checked all his skills and magic from

start to finish, and even activated a few for real to test the effects. Thankfully, there was nothing in the surroundings that would've been bad to destroy, so he was able to test the skills and magic to a certain extent of his real power.

As the result of mass producing large craters, he found out that the paralysis frames and cooldowns for Martial Skills had disappeared, and that it was now possible to control the intensity of magic.

Up until now, though it was realistic, since it was a game it was natural to have such restrictions. However, it is obvious that such things wouldn't exist in reality.

And so, in exchange for these unnatural things that were characteristic of games, instead, you now couldn't move without considering trivial injuries like hurting your tendons, or spraining your joints. These sorts of things would be obvious in reality. At any rate, right now Shin wasn't in a game world. If he took an enemy's attack, it wouldn't just end with his HP gauge dropping. If he didn't think carefully about his movements, when it came to crunch, there was the risk that he wouldn't be able to take action.

Shin was once again reminded himself of the reality that this wasn't a game.

Noticing that he was bewildered at the differences between this world, and the game world that he knew, Shin thought that at some point, the virtual reality【THE NEW GATE】had become his 'second reality' before he had realised.
'In that case, should the place I'm in now be called a 'third reality?' thought Shin with a wry smile.
It took him quite a long time before that second reality (the world of the game) to start feeling real, but as expected, it seemed that he was adjusting to this third reality quite quickly. As though the weariness from just a while ago was a lie, he was amazed at himself for moving about like this.

"Well then, I guess it's about time to go."

Whilst saying this, Shin took out a single bookmark. He brought this ordinary white bookmark above his head.

"Go home!"

When Shin chanted this, light gathered around the bookmark, and when the ball of light had reached the size of a baseball, it took the shape of a falcon.
The falcon made of light lightly floated in the air, and turned its head to a certain direction.

What Shin had used was an item called【Guide】; an item that would point out the direction to a registered location. Normally it was used to mark the location of a rest spot in a hunting field, but a certain group of players, would like Shin, register their homes as the location.

[Note: Um, what the Japanese calls the item is 'Guide of Guiding' 導きのしるべ, but it sounds quite a bit more stupid in English.]

Shin didn't know where he was because the map wasn't functioning, but he saw the【Guide】in the items column, and since the only location registered was his home, he decided to head there first.

Incidentally, the fact that the ball of light had turned into a falcon was due to Shin's taste. The light could turn into a form the player liked.

"Onwards, to my house!"

Shin began to run in the direction indicated by the light. At the moment he had chosen the destination for the【Guide】, it indicated that the distance to the location was 67 kemels away. 1 kemel was roughly 1 kilometre, so it was 67 kilometres ahead.
Normally it would be quite a long way away on foot, but Shin's reinforced leg power was very far from the norm. He could move fairly quickly just by walking lightly.
The running Shin had already reached 70km/h. On top of that, because he wasn't riding a vehicle, he could continue running regardless of if it was a thick forest, or a rugged rockland.

"Yaaaaaaaaahooooooooooooo!!"

Because it felt nice to cut through the wind as he ran, Shin let out a large scream as though to dispel the anxiety he had felt since waking up.

Though he didn't know how much endurance he had, it hardly felt draining at all; he felt like he could run forever, and so he continued running without rest.

On the way, he spotted a four armed bear (Tetra Grizzly), a two headed snake (Twinhead Snake) and a boar with a mane like fire (Flame Boar), so to test out his strength, he fought them one by one. The levels of the bear, snake and boar were 87, 68, and 79 respectively.
Since he had confirmed there names and levels with【Analysis Ⅹ】, there was no mistaking it.
All of them fought with basic patterns, and were monsters that beginners would often hunt, so for Shin they were foes he could defeat with one hand[defeat without needing to care].

However, unlike when it was a game, Shin caught a glimpse of the spontaneity and will to live[desire to help themselves] which had given him a chill.

[Note: At this point, take a break and search google images and wiki for "hokora/祠" and "暖簾/noren". I'll be leaving hokora as it is, since it's uniquely Japanese, and Shin is largely Japanese themed.]

An hour later, after cutting through meadows, jumping over rocks, and running through forests...
Around the time he started to see a large rampart[castle-wall type wall], the falcon of light started to blink, indicating to him that they were close to the target destination.

He dropped his speed, and stood still. The direction that the falcon indicated was slightly off from the wall. It seemed that it was inside the forest that spread before the wall. If Shin's memory served him right, then there shouldn't have been a town enclosed by a rampart near his home.

"Just when the heck was that built?"

muttered Shin, as he looked at the wall.
The size of the rampart was around the size of a six-story building. It looked like it was built from cut stone, and it brought about a dignified atmosphere.

Were the parts broken here and there because of monster attacks, or where they because of war?

In the game, there had been siege war events that large numbers of people had taken part in, Shin included. The ramparts had been enchanted with monster-repellent, fortification, and magic-resistant enchantments, so Shin felt it would be difficult to attack.

Shin suspected that it wasn't a town inside, but he couldn't tell at all what was really inside. Well, since it was surrounded by these reinforced walls, it probably wouldn't be a deserted ruin.

At any rate, right now he didn't have any business with it, so stopping his thoughts, he returned his gaze to the forest, and walked in the direction that the falcon indicated.

After walking for about 100 mels, there was a clearing that was different to the surroundings and vegetation. Unlike the trees up until now that had diameters of 30 or 40 cemels at best, in the clearing stood a tree whose diameter exceeded 1 mel.

In the midst of the atmosphere exuded by the massive tree, stood a building that was nostalgic to him.

It was a building built of stone and wood, and above the curtained[noren] shop entrance hung a sign that read in large letters, 『Yorozuya　Tsuki no Hokora』. *[Jack of All Trades　Hokora of the Moon]*

"It looks pretty much the same, huh."

It was unmistakably the same as before his fight with Origin. Seeing his unchanged home, Shin's heart felt like it had found support.

In the game, 『Yorozuya　Tsuki no Hokora』 was a weapons, armour, and items shop run by Shin, that also doubled as his home. Fundamentally, it sold items that were things that Shin had picked up in fields or dungeons, and when he felt like it, things that Shin crafted himself.

The places Shin visited were almost all fields and dungeons where high level monsters would saunter about, so it was easy to obtain rare items and materials, and as a shop that sold these, Tsuki no Hokora was a hidden, but

well-known shop, famous primarily amongst advanced players. The cause was probably because the goods being what they were, had fairly hefty prices, and thus the ones who could buy these were limited to advanced players.

Whilst reminiscing about his shop's bustling business (though it was really rare that it was bustling), Shin passed through the noren, and opened the door. Just how was it doing, that shop with nothing but a reception desk, and shelves lined with goods?

Inside the shop stood a number of men and women, wearing a mantle over their armour. Among them, a number of them had noticed Shin's entrance, and two of them approached him.

"Sorry, but the shop is busy with us right now, see? Could you come back later?"

The one who said this was a blonde haired young man clad in a very extravagantly decorated armour. His height was around Shin's but probably because he worked out, his arms and legs were thicker than Shin's.

"Did something happen?"

"It doesn't matter, we said get out!"

The one who ordered Shin in a strong tone when he asked about what was going on was the brown haired young man who had approached Shin with the blonde man. Just like the blonde one, he was clad in an excessively decorated armour. He was a head taller than Shin, and had a firm build that balanced with his height.

"But I've also got stuff that I need done by today."

"You're noisy. Adventurers like you shouldn't fucking talk back!

"Oi, stop it, Iran!"

Iran was probably the name of the brown haired man. Having judged that he didn't need to use keigo, Shin used his normal speech style to object to Iran.

[Note: Shin's first line was using teneigo, but by second he's using plain speech.]

Perhaps because Shin's unwillingness had pissed him off, Iran had made to forcefully push Shin, and thrust his palms at Shin's solar plexus. Seeing that Shin didn't particularly react, Iran's mouth curved into a smirk.

"Whoa!"

However, Shin didn't even twitch at the hands that came at him, and in contrast, Iran lost his balance and fell butt-first to the floor. His armour hit the floor, and a sound too loud to ignore rang out through the shop. The eyes of those around them fell on Shin and Iran.
There was Iran, dumbstruck and unable to process what had happened, and Shin who was wondering what was up with him.

"Ku-, you fuc-!""

Just as Iran moved his hand to his sword in a frenzy, he cowered with a start at the loud voice that resounded through the room.

"What's the racket!?"

Thinking about how things had become a bother, Shin sighed in his mind.

◆◆◆◆◆◆

The crowd of people naturally parted, and the figure of a single man appeared. He was a handsome blonde haired, blue eyed man, who, as expected, was also wearing a needlessly glamourous set of armour, and was glaring over at Shin and Iran from a few mels away.
Unlike before, Iran had suddenly become quiet.
As for Shin, seeing the man part the crowd, "Moses, huh..." he said, feeling that he seriously didn't give a shit.

"I thoguht I told you not to let anybody in."

"My deepest apologies, Loost-sama!"

Iran bowed without delay. Seeing Iran's behaviour, Shin suspected that this man was fairly high ranked.

Without sparing a glance at Iran, Loost approached Shin. His eyes looked Shin up and down.

(Uwah, someone more annoying than Iran appeared.)

Ignoring Shin's thoughts, Loost clunked over with heavy steps, and stopped before Shin.

"..."

"?"

Seeing Loost remain silent, Shin tilted his head in wonder, when Iran yelled out angrily,

"Oi! What do you mean by standing in front of Loost-sama, without even naming yourself!?"

It seemed that Loost was standing silently before Shin because he was waiting for Shin to name himself.

"My apologies. I am Shin, a wanderer."

Since it would be annoying if someone who was addressed with -sama had his eye on Shin, Shin named himself with a bow. According to Shin's experience, Loost was the type of person who would let a lot of things go if you humbled yourself, even if only for form's sake.

"Hmph, it seems you don't know etiquette. Well, that's fine. Since you're a wanderer, I can't expect you to be cultured."

Ignoring the words of Loost who nodded arrogantly to himself, Shin smiled wryly inside at the fact that this technique worked in other worlds as well.

"Our business here is done. We're leaving."

With that, Loost started walking straight forward. Since it seemed they would collide, Shin immediately moved to the left.
Apart from the blonde young man who saw Shin's movement, a number of other people narrowed their eyes at his nimbleness.

"Tch."

Including Iran who left with a tsk, the men and women who seemed to be subordinates followed Loost out of the shop. Because of that, only three of them remained in the shop.

"Iran did something unpardonable. I'll apologise in his place."

The one who spoke to Shin was the blonde man from earlier. The other two made apologetic expressions as well.

"No, it isn't like anything really happened."

"Hearing that is a relief. I'm Ardi. Ardi Sheil. If you ever need to rely on the knight order, come visit me."

"I am Shin. If the opportunity presents itself, I shall take you up on your kind offer."

Shin replied as he shook the right hand Ardi held out, with his own. It seemed that the group from earlier were knights. Considering that, they were pretty haughty, thought Shin, but seeing Ardi and these two made him rethink that.

Ardi left the shop, and the two left behind gave Shin light nods, and followed him. They were probably Ardi's subordinates.

Now that all the knights had left, the shop felt spacious. Shin noticed the shelves and goods that he couldn't see before.

(The weapons are almost all copper or iron, and at best, silver. The armour is also just leather, copper, iron or silver, huh? As for items, they're low ranked potions[HP recovery] and ethers[MP recovery], and also a few status-fixing pills. And there are no raw materials.)

(The store doesn’t seem to be more flourished than before…)

It was true that the store was in a worrying state.

“What are you talking about?”

“Eh?”

Shin was startled with the question that he didn't know what to answer. He seemed to have spoken his mind unconsciously. As he turned to the direction of the voice, he saw an elven girl with black hair and golden eyes from the other side of the counter. A pointed ear can be seen between the silky black hair, so he might be correct.

If ten people saw her, they would all be admiring her beauty. She had a beautiful appearance that matched perfectly with her figure. Her height was approximately 160 cemels which was one head lower than Shin's height. Her skin was healthy white and her chest was very firm and proportionate with her overall slim body.

From her looks, she seemed to be around 17 or 18 years old, but as elves lived a long life, she might have already lived several hundred years.

"Ahh, I was seeing what kind of goods you have."

"Is that so? I thought I heard some rude remark just now."

"There was no such intention."

"Well, feel free to look around, those nuisances are gone now."

As the elf said so, he sat on a chair provided for the counter.

"Those nuisances? "

"Yes, they often come by to ask when will master come back. I have to say, they are persistent."

They probably came frequently because Shin noticed her tone became weary just from saying that.

"It must be hard. Ah, this is a late introduction but I am Shin. As you have seen, I'm a wanderer of the street."

"That's a serious way of introducing yourself to an ordinary salesclerk, isn't it? I'm Tiera Lucent. Just call me, Tiera. I am the acting storekeeper and the apprentice of the shop owner here. If you have some good items

and materials to sell, I'll buy it."

"Yes, please take care of me during that time. Is Tiera's master so incredible that even the knights come frequently?"

"What are you saying? Even children nowadays know that the store owner of 'Tsuki no Hokora' is Schnee Raizar." (T/N: 'Tsuki no Hokora' is the name of the shop, it means Moon Shrine) (E/N: Schnee means snow in German)

"Haa, is your master really that famous?"

"It was said by the people themselves. Still, master's truths are unquestionable…"

"To have such famous person behind this shop…"

Shin who had a slight misunderstanding of the store showed an impression, after all, if there was a famous person here, the shop should be doing better than he thought. However, he had a familiar feeling with the name of the store owner, like he remembered it somewhere.

"Schnee Raizar…Schnee Raizar…Schnee…Schnee Raizar…Ahh!?"

"Hey, what's wrong!?"

Tiera was surprised when Shin suddenly shouted. The chair made a 'Gatan' sound after it fell when Shin abruptly stood up.

"Oh, my bad. I was a little surprised."

Shin apologized and returned the chair back to its original position. He thought about the name which he had heard somewhere, but it was only natural, since it was one of the support characters whom Shin made to be the salesclerk of Tsuki no Hokora in the game, and the name was Schnee Raizar.

"Sorry, but is it okay if I want to confirm something about your master?"

"Eh, yes, I will answer if I can."

Tiera was slightly drawn back by Shin's menacing look. However, Shin who was surprised at her agreement, didn't notice Tiera's expression at all.

"Is the race of Schnee Raizar a High Elf with long hair that reaches her hips, blue eyes, a beautiful woman with height around 166 cemels?"

"...That is certainly right...are you my master's fan?"

Again, Tiera was drawn back slightly but Shin was still unaware of it.

"No, I'm not. Schnee is an acquaintance of mine or something like that. (It was a store owner and a salesclerk relationship in the game)

"Master's acquaintance? Is that true?"

"Although I don't know if your master remember..."

Tiera looked at Shin with full of doubt and suspicion.

It was only natural since Shin suddenly visited and said he was acquainted with the store owner in which Shin didn't have proof or that the store owner may have no recollection of Shin.

"Speaking of which, where is Schnee now?"

"I'm sorry, but I won't say it. Why would I tell you something that I won't tell the knights?"

"...Okay, I understand..."

Although Shin had no idea how hierarchy worked in this world, he understood that a knight was a high ranking position from the situation with Ardi a little while ago. And a wanderer itself was less trusted which made Shin discouraged.

"I'll pass a message if you want. Half of my work is to receive message for my master after all."

"Half...for it to be half of your job..."

"Most of it comes from upper echelon of the country and the guilds. Some

requests are in verbal message with locations stated. Because they are coming from various countries with confidential information, I have to close one eye and pretend that I didn't see them."

"I have nothing to say except that it is amazing"

What kind of request must have come from the upper echelon of the country, thought Shin.

"Although I rarely have to receive one. So, what are you going to do? Send a message?"

"Well, can you ask for the time being?"

"A message will cost you 1000 Jul."

"What Jul?...Is that money?"

Shin tilted his head because he had never heard of that currency before. THE NEW GATE used Geyl as currency.

"Seriously, are you listening? How can you travel without knowing the currency?"

"No, it was different from the currency I was using before."

"Currency used before? The currency was unchanged for around 400 years and won't change anytime soon. Can you show it to me?"

400 years...Shin stiffened from hearing the words. Shin thought the previously currency could be used normally. Suddenly, he became like Urashima Taro*. (T/N: Google it)

"It's this coin..."

Shin took out 1 Geyl from the 'Item Box' and placed it on the counter. A Geyl was a circular gold coin that have a diameter of 3 cemels. The center of the coin was painted with a girl held in a dragon's arm with 8 feathers surrounding it.

"...Hey, just now, where did you take that out from?"

Tiera's eyes widened seeing the Geyl gold coin appearing out of nowhere.

"From the Item Box of course"

"Item…Box…"

Tiera seemed to be more shocked upon hearing those words than when the Geyl gold coin had suddenly appeared.

"Tiera?"

"Oh, um, what?"

"No, you seemed to be very surprised, is there something wrong?"

"There is nothing wrong. You are able to use Item Box. Of course I'm surprised."

"?…Is it something to be surprised about?"

"You…"

Tiera dropped her shoulders for some reason. As for Shin, he still couldn't understand why Tiera was very surprised.

"Nowadays, only Kings and the elders of certain races can use an Item Box. Furthermore, it is only possible for races that have long lives such as High Elves or High Pixie. I am surprised because you are unexpectedly able to use it. Are you someone from the royal family?"

"Nope. I'm not from the royal family."

Shin was surprised by the Item Box status quo. He could not imagine that only important people could use the Item Box when all players got one.

By the way, the "High" before the race name was because the races have experienced reincarnation dozens of times before getting the title. There were many races in THE NEW GATE, but the base race were Human, Beast, Dragnil, Elves, and seven kinds of Pixie.

Humans were classified as a Hominini tribe, Beast as Therianthropy* or

Beastman, Dragnil as Dragonewt tribe, Lord as Devil tribe, and Pixie as Fairy group.

"Even though I was only using it naturally."

"Haa, that's certainly not natural. That reminds me, what is this awful feeling of various magic races mixing in you. Elves, Lord, Dragnil and others, what's going on?"

"I do not understand it either. Anyway, my race is High Human."

Shin was certain of his race as it can be revealed in his status screen. As for High Human, the racial characteristic was high state abnormalities resistance with enhanced magic tolerance. While in other games, the ability of the character was the lowest from the other races and were rarely in a party or even in going solo.

(Well, it was rather a plus for me)

It was the humans which had the obscure viewpoint, but from Shin stats, which were developed even more and incomparably by the race's special quality, he was thankful. Though, only a small number of players were able to say it.

"High…Human…?"

"Yeah? Yes, that is right."

Shin was still reminiscing about memories when humans were still being look down. Tiera was dumbfounded and muttered something to Shin.

And Shin was startled from the words spoken by Tiera.

"High Humans…are extinct…"

"Ehh, extinct…Extinct?!"

Chapter 2

THE NEW GATE

Extinction. Tiera said so.

That the High Human race was extinct.

"...Then, there won't be any of the human race around?"

"No, humans are still around. You saw the knights a little while ago."

"Really!?"

Shin had misunderstood about the Human extinction and involuntarily retorted.

"It's the High Humans that went extinct, not the humans."

"What's the difference?"

"It is different. The High Human race consisted of 6 people who formerly ruled the Redmond continent. Even 10,000 humans couldn't win against them. Their strength was in another dimension."

"The continent was ruled by 6 people?"

Shin remembered there was place that was ruled by 6 people. He had a feeling that he heard such an episode before.

"Can you explain more in detail?"

"Even though most people know this, all right then. I'll tell you. In the past, around 500 years ago, there were the High Humans who once ruled the continent. Though they were only 6 people, other races couldn't do anything to them because of their overwhelming power."

"....."

"However, their domination was suddenly ended."

"Ended?"

"Yes, ended. Not only the High Humans but many other races such as

High Elves, High Lords, High Beasts, and High Dwarfs have disappeared. Many influential people like Kings, Elders, Heroes, and Generals disappeared as well. It's said that it was a sudden disappearance. According to master, numerous influential and strong men disappeared. The day of disappearance happened was called the 'Dusk of the Majesty'"

"The Dusk of the Majesty…"

"It is said that all High Humans disappeared at that time. And there were only 6 of them."

Sudden disappearance. Shin had a theory about that.

The phenomenon which caused many people to disappear.

(It's that day. The day when I defeated 'Origin', and everyone logged out. There is no conclusive evidence, but 'Dusk of the Majesty' might be the result from that day.)

Kings, Heroes, and Elders would probably be guild masters. Tens of thousands of people were expected to be released from the game. Shin didn't know the exact number, but there were at least 10 thousand people stuck in the game. It probably looked like a sudden disappearance for the people in this world.

(To think that the 6 High Humans had ruled the continent before that…)

Shin finally understood. 6 of the High Human race. Without a doubt…

(It's…us…)

When THE NEW GATE was still a good VRMMO and before it turned into a death game, there was a guild which was said to be the strongest in THE NEW GATE.

The guild was named 'Rokuten' as it was formed by the 6 High Humans. The small guild defeated major guilds one by one in THE NEW GATE, until its name was known to all players in just one month. They had a reputation of 'PK'ing players who tried to oppose them. (T/N: I used the romaji name, Rokuten『六天』not 'Devas' in the manga, Rokuten means six heavens/six skies)

Shin was a former member of Rokuten at the beginning. Back then, it was stupid to choose the human race when playing for the first time. Human were despised by other races and Shin had a dark history because of that.

Needless to say, all member were composed of High Humans and had almost maxed stats. Even the weakest member had HP and MP maxed, while the rest of the players averaged around 900 for their stats.

While in competition with every other major guild, the battles that took place looked unbelievable as it was 6 people against thousands of people. At that time, each field was burnt up by an expanding wide-range fire magic. The leader who was surprised got ambushed and it was settled.

Since then, no one dared to provoke the Rokuten guild. Even the ones to hold derision against human had decreased. Not only was the combat power of High Human shown, their unusual magic resistance was also demonstrated. Most magic didn't have effect on them. Moreover, Poisons, Paralysis, Confusion, Enchanting, Burn, Frostbite, Confusion, Petrifaction, all of them were ineffective against a High Human. Besides, it only took a few second for them to completely cure their bodies.

It was rather fortunate (or unfortunate) that only Shin among the Rokuten got stuck in the death game. At least three months or more could be reduced if another person from Rokuten was there, thought Shin.

"....."

"What's wrong? Why are you suddenly silent?"

"No, it's nothing. Do you mind if we change the topic to the currency?"

Shin felt he would be digging his own grave if he continued to talk about High Humans, so he deliberately changed the topic to the currency, which they talked about before.

"No, it's alright. Is this the currency you have been using?"

"Yes."

"Ah, to be able to bring out such valuable item, maybe you being a High Human isn't a lie after all."

Apparently Tiera didn't believe that Shin was a High Human.

While sighing, Tiera took the gold coin and looked at it. She seemed to be confirming whether it was genuine.

And Shin doubted what Tiera's meant by 'valuable'.

"Is is valuable? It's only 1 G though."

1 Geyl was equivalent to 1 Yen in the game. If converted, it's value would be worth 1/1000 Yen in reality. It was the lowest currency in the game. Incidentally, Shin's Item Box contained one hundred million Geyl. It was a mystery, as why it was displayed 'G' as 'Geyl' not 'Gold' with the gold coin.

"The Geyl gold coin is often abbreviated to G gold coin. However, now it's hard to obtain. You might not know this, but the Geyl gold coin is a magic item that can amplify magic. It is occasionally found in ruins. When a Geyl gold coin gets exhibited in auctions, it can reach a billion Jul or even more. The Jul is the current commonly used currency on how many J gold coin or how many J silver coin…J means to be used as a method of counting. (T/N: 1 J gold coin = 1,000,000 J and 1 J silver coin = 10,000 J. E.g. If you have 2 J gold coins and 87 J silver coins, you'll have a total 2,870,000 J)

"So this one is worth 1 billion…"

"A magician would kill to get even one as the price is enormous and most can't afford it. Though master had shown me one, it is my first time to seeing any other than that. After all, 1 billion is the minimum amount you can get, the price can reach 10 times more than that."

"For this one Geyl gold coin to be worth that much…by the way, how often it can be found?"

"Rarely, but I can't say. Even when new ruins were discovered, the chances of finding it were still very low."

"Is that so? Look like I have to be careful when buying goods."

Shin thought about converting it to increase his funds, but he canceled it after realizing how valuable it was.

“That’s a wise decision, but you are doing it just now.”

“That’s an awful joke. However, I will be careful next time.”

“Are you going to sell something? I told you I’d buy if you have good materials or items.”

“Well, how about this?”

Shin took out item cards, which he got whilst traveling, from the Item Box. In the game, it was possible to change an item into a card. It was the same in this world, too. The materials turned into cards automatically and could even be stored in the Item Box. Once the item became a card, a picture of the item was drawn on the card. The card could be materialized anytime.

Shin put his item cards on the counter. The item cards varied from Tetra Grizzly, Twinhead Snake, Flame Boar, and their fangs, claws, furs, meats and so forth to raw materials such as sparkling jewels.

In the game, the materials can be sold and processed in various places. The jewel would especially fetch a high price, because it was able to give attributes or additional effects to equipment and weapons, and only if it was done by blacksmiths. Jewels could be found as monsters drop them after being killed, though the drops’ probability are low. The jewels which Shin showed were Grade 7, which was the lowest grade.

“Item cards…”

“Hmm? What is it? Is there something strange?”

“No, if you have an Item Box, this is natural, isn’t it? Though I don’t know if you already know this, so I’ll say it just in case. Because an item card is also expensive to a certain degree, it’s better not to take them out recklessly.”

“It’s troublesome. Should I purposely treat them as the materials?”

“That’s the normal way! You are really weird!”

“Ah, I see… I see. I understand, so please calm down.”

“Mou~, you made me mad again.”

While saying that, Tiera still focused on doing her job. She materialized the item cards and began to appraise them. Even though she was surprised, she still knew how to use the item cards.

“From Tetra Grizzly to Twinhead Snake and Flame Boar. Not only are these materials of ferocious monsters, none of these monsters can be found unless you go deep into the woods. Just what kind of person are you?”

“I just defeated them on my way here. The fight was not so ferocious as you described though.”

“But it takes several knights to kill one monster…well whatever, as long as you defeated them. I’m not that surprise after all that occurred before.”

It seemed that the monsters were unexpectedly dangerous. Shin had thought they were beginner monsters.

“Well, don’t worry about it. Leaving that aside, how are the items?”

“That’s right. The raw materials are still in a good state due to the materialization of the card. The material’s price would be 1 J gold coin and 27 J silver coins, so the total would be 1,270,000 J. The jewel is Grade 7 with a high purity, so the price is 25 J gold coins, so the price is 25,000,000 J. All together would be 26,270,000 J.

“I don’t know whether it’s expensive or cheap due to the conversion of currency…”

“It’s a little less than the original price, but the price of jewels can go up and down depending on the market. This grade and purity is usually worth about 20,000,000 ~ 23,000,000 J.

“Oh, I’m lucky. I gained more than 2,000,000 J.”

“How is it? If you are fine with the price, I’ll buy it.”

“It is my pleasure. I’ll sell it. Thank you. And I’ll give you this as well.”

While saying that, Shin pointed to the Geyl gold coin on the counter.

"...Is this a joke?"

"Why would it be!?"

"Didn't you hear me speak a while ago!? A Geyl gold coin is worth billions, no one in their right mind would give it freely in this world."

"Here."

Shin pointed at himself.

"Are you sure?...I'm not going to return it even if you ask for it."

"Yup."

Tiera quickly grab the Geyl gold coin and held it to her chest. Her eyes were sparkling while looking at the Geyl gold coin. At this time, Shin's eyes were glued at Tiera's chest, he was like a sad man's destiny.

"Ah, it's like dream come true... a G gold coin..."

Tiera's expression changed completely to a delighted face with enchanting eyes. Shin suddenly felt a strange seductiveness from her, which caused his cheek to turned slightly red. He was then shaking his head to remove the dirty thought.

"Well, I'm glad you like it. Elves should find it useful since you can use ma——"

"Wait a moment!"

"——gic."

Tiera interrupted Shin's speech and stood up abruptly. Her expression had a look of someone who saw something unbelievable.

"...What is it?"

"Just now...did you say elf?"

"Ah, I said it...oh? Wasn't it elf?"

Shin remembered that the facial feature of elves and High Elves were pointed ears, so he wanted to confirm it…Shin was still puzzled, because it may be a race he never seen before.

“I should look like a cat girl with red hair and black eyes.”

“Cat girl with red hair and black eyes?”

Cat people was one of the popular Beast races among female players and a certain group of male players. There were various derivations in Beast races, as for cat people, there are Persian cat, Calico cat and so forth. In addition, players were divided from their animal model, some players had the same face, arms, tail, wings and many more, while some only a portion of their body.

But in Shin’s eyes, Tiera was a beautiful black-haired and golden-eyed elven girl. There was no cat person, red hair, and black eyes.

“I can only see a beautiful elf girl with black hair and golden eyes in front of me.”

“That…”

He tried to emphasize her beauty, but it seemed she didn’t hear it.

“How? Master already cast illusion magic on me.”

“Illusion magic?”

Speaking of illusion magic, it was usually used to confuse or show hallucinations to the other party. It was a magic that had left a strong impression on Shin, because one of the magic’s users was from Rokuten.

“Uuu…to be exposed like this…”

Tiera was looking down and her face looked like the world was coming to an end. Tiera’s sudden depression caused Shin to desperately try to resolve the situation, since he didn’t know much about her and what caused her to be dejected.

“Um…Tiera?”

“Wha…what is it?”

He intended to talk gently, but Tiera was nervous that it was exaggerated.

“I noticed Tiera is an elf only because it is one of my quality features.”

“Qua…quality?”

“Yes. Illusion magic is the magic that shows hallucinations to and confuses the other party. However, it might be not effective towards the guys who have a strong resistance against magic. Therefore, that’s why I see the true form of Tiera.”

“But…even with strong resistance, for the magic that master cast to be broken…”

Even with Shin’s explanation, Tiera still wore the face that showed disbelief. According to Shin’s memory, Schnee, who was the master of Tiera, was a Lv. 255 High Elf. Furthermore, the magic used was surely strong, because High Elves were a magic specialized type. Though the status couldn’t be compared to Shin’s. Even other High Humans virtually could not match Shin’s stats, so no illusion magic could affect him.

Shin sighed after a long pause.

“Saw it”

“Hmm?”

“You, you saw my true form, right?”

“I saw a beautiful elven girl with black hair and golden eyes, did I make a mistake?”

“……”

No response. Shin became discouraged and demoralized.

“…Aren’t you scared?”

Shin, who was regretting that he said something strange, heard Tiera's soft voice. Her voice was like a child who was frightened by something.

"Scared of what?"

Shin immediately relaxed his thoughts and talked in a calm manner.

Still, is he frightening her?

When Tiera said in a trembling voice, Shin remembered one of the Rokuten member's face.

Shin was proud of the login time he wasted for gamer class as he was having fun. But that member was hospitalized because of his excessive playing time.

The story was confessed during the offline meeting among members. Shin had a feeling that it was the same atmosphere at that time, as now with Tiera.

He was scared that the his true self was known.

But there was no one in Rokuten that cared about such things. Shin remembered that the member was very relieved.

Because there was such a situation, Shin was able to listen to Tiera without feeling shaken and changing expression.

"...You don't know this either, do you?...Black-haired Elves are the symbol of bad luck."

Tiera spoke while looking down.

"The symbol of bad luck?"

"Yes, Every elf is born with white hair. As they grow up, it turns gold, silver, green or blue-green colored. Can you believe it? My own hair was originally silver-colored."

Tiera's face looked like she was punishing herself.

“But now my hair is black. There is never a time when an elf’s hair turns black.”

“Never turns black?”

“Yes, elves with black hair bring misfortune. It happened to me all the time. Strong monsters suddenly attacked my village many times, and I was expelled from my village because of that.”

“……”

“I was picked up by master after wandering aimlessly. And this store has a strong barrier to prevent the monsters from attacking. So I have not left this store for more than 100 years.”

“100 years?…That’s a long time.”

“Yes, but since I can live without inconveniencing someone, this is good for me.”

It’s impossible to be good, Shin wanted to shout. To be confined in the store for 100 years could never be good. However, he refrained from saying that, because nothing could be changed even if it was said. He clenched his fists in anger.

Although not even a day had yet passed since their meeting, Shin personally could properly comprehend why he was angry at himself.

“…Tiera, I want to confirm something.”

“…Confirm what?”

“Ah, though Tiera’s hair was originally silver-colored, why is it black-colored now?”

Shin had a feeling that it would give him a hint.

“It suddenly became black-colored on a certain day.”

“Suddenly?”

“Yes, suddenly. I woke up in the morning as usual, and it had become black-colored. I was really scared at that time, as I didn’t understand what had happened.”

As Tiera recalled that time, her body was trembling while hugging herself tight. From Tiera’s explanation, Shin was thinking at full steam for relevant information or knowledge.

“Suddenly, hair color changed…Attacked by monsters…The color of the hair…Changing color characteristic…Monsters…Attacked multiple times… Encountered many times…Possibly strong…The characteristic of color change…Vulnerable to monsters…Such a thing!?”

While Shin murmured something, a moment flashed in Shin’s mind. If his memory was correct, a possible condition was met.

“There…there is a way if the conditions are met!!”

“Eh? What is it?”

Shin was shouting while staring at Tiera. Tiera was shaken by Shin’s sudden shout.

Despite that, Shin’s eyes remained fixed on Tiera.

“I wonder why I had forgotten. However with this…hmm? This is strange, why is the status not displayed? It should be automatic.”

The reason Shin keep staring at Tiera was because he wanted to see her status. If Shin’s prediction was correct, then the status should appear.

“Uhm… ‘Skill Window Open’…Analyze…Analyze…ah, here it is. Display player and monster except when turned off. If I turn this on…”

Shin looked at Tiera again after applying the setting. Tiera felt a little uncertain as Shin was glaring into empty space while moving his finger.

“Okay, now I can see the status. Name, level, race…good…and… Ahhhhhh!!”

Shin, who found what he looked for, unintentionally posed a victory pose.

Tiera, who was watching Shin's eccentricity, stayed on guard.

"Be delighted, Tiera! I just found out what causes your bad luck."

"Eh?"

"Believe me. I'm sure because the display status appeared. The color of hair changes, the multiple attacks by monsters, they are all caused by【Cursed Gift】."

"【Cursed Gift】?"

Tiera was dumbfounded because she didn't understand its meaning.

【Cursed Gift】was a curse that suddenly occurred in THE NEW GATE. It was literally bad luck.

Originally, players could obtain【Title】or【Gift】from regularly clearing the quests. On occasion, support abilities and items could be gained from it. Depending on the【Title】, stats could be slightly strengthened as more new skills became available.

Then suddenly the【Cursed Gift】had fallen to all players. The curse had negative effect such as random status degradation, gained all kind of abnormalities, random encounters with strong, unique monsters and so on. It could only be cured with the magic skill【Purification】or by using the item【Holy Water】.

Although the negative effect was random, the players with【Cursed Gift】had some part of their body turn black. Their status screens also showed an image of a laughing reaper.

Subsequently, Shin had confirmed that there was a laughing reaper shown at Tiera's status screen.

"Alright, to make this quick, Tiera, I want you to step out from behind the counter and stand at the center of the store."

"Eh…okay…"

As Shin said that, Tiera stood at the center of the store without much

resistance as she was confused at the situation.

"Here I go. Activate【Purification】!!"

In order to eliminate the curse, Shin extended his right hand toward Tiera and activated his magic skill【Purification】. Shin acquired the skill that mainly used by a priest due to a certain circumstance.

Golden light began to gather on Shin's right hand. At the same time, Tiera's whole body was wrapped in golden light.

"It's…it's warm…"

Although Tiera was surprised when she got wrapped in the light, she didn't feel any danger from the light emitted. Tiera felt comfort and warmth instead, while the purification process took place.

After about 5 minutes, the light gradually dimmed and disappeared.

Even after the light disappeared, the absentminded Tiera took a while to come back to her senses.

"…Was it successful?…"

Muttered Shin as he felt baffled. The laughing reaper's icon slowly faded on Tiera's status screen as Shin looked at it. However, the hair that should have returned to its original color, was still mostly black. A silver highlight was seen among the black hair.

The atmosphere between those two became silent for a while, because it was hard to determine whether the curse had disappeared.

"So, how is it?" Tiera asked.

"The curse is gone…it's…it's…but…the hair wasn't completely restored…"

He had a hard time saying it.

"Hair?"

“Ah…I’m sorry, only part of your hair returned to its original color. But just in case, please confirm it.”

Shin said while feeling discouraged. A mirror was taken out from Item Box and passed to Tiera. Tiera snatched the mirror from Shin after she heard the word hair, and held it in front of her.

Tiera’s face was reflected in the mirror. There was a face that never changed. But one portion of her hair changed into a shining silver-color.

It was obviously the color Tiera once had.

“…Sob…sob…”

Tears started to flow down from Tiera’s eyes.

After that, tears started to burst out like a broken dam.

“Uu…sob…uu…”

While wiping her tears with her sleeve, Tiera cried quietly.

And in front of Tiera, there was a man who was totally confused.

Needless to say, it’s Shin, after all.

The girl who cried in front of him was not a little child, but an adult woman, yet due to Shin’s limited reasoning ability, he just remained still in that situation.

“Sob…just a moment…hick…need to…catch my breath…”

“Ah, I understand. Just take it slow.”

Shin passed a towel as he returned to his senses and dragged the chair from by the counter to let Tiera sit while she wept.

◆◆◆◆

About 5 minutes later, Tiera raised her face from the towel. No tears remained, but her eyes were still red.

“I’m sorry, I’m alright now.”

“Is that so?”

“Why are you using honorifics?”

“No, well. Even though I removed the curse, your hair is mostly unchanged so I felt apologetic for that…”

While Tiera was crying, Shin was afraid that she might get angry again because of the hair.

However, judging from Tiera’s expression, she hadn’t shown any signs of being angry. At this time, Shin became timid. And just a while ago, the position was the exact opposite.

“I’m good about the hair…Please don’t use honorifics towards me. After more than 100 years of having black-colored hair, even if it’s only a little that has returned, I’m glad.”

Tiera smiled and looked very happy as she said that. And all the frightening feelings that Shin had, dissipated after seeing Tiera’s smile.

“Really? I am glad too.”

But, Shin thought. His mother and his younger sister always said that the hair was very important to women. That’s why Shin felt unsatisfactory for her.

“Yes, I’m really good, so don’t worry about it. But is the curse gone for real?”

“Ah, it should be, no doubt about it. I think it will be clear if you go out from the store.”

Since Tiera said it’s good, Shin convinced himself not to fuss about it.

Tiera’s curse, which was random encounters with unique monsters, couldn’t be proven to have disappeared unless she went outside the barrier. Because high level unique monsters couldn’t creep inside the barrier.

THE NEW GATE pursued reality in the game, so unbreakable objects were almost nonexistent. And the player's stores, like Shin's, were often aimed at by thieves player.

Therefore, many skills barrier system existed to prevent intrusion to the store. Which were applicable to monsters, too.

"Honestly, it is a little scary. What if the curse wasn't dispelled?"

"It's okay. Since I was cured from the curse too."

"Eh? Eh!! You got cursed too!?"

"Ah, yes, my curse type was random encounters with high level unique monsters too, but I cured it with【Purification】skill.

When Shin was cursed, the unique monsters thoroughly tried to attack Shin repeatedly, until Shin was tired of it. And there was a time when Shin used them to raise his level.

"Is that so. Then, what was the highest level of monster that has attacked you?"

"Horn Dragon was probably the strongest. I think it was around level 200."

"Is that the higher rank species of Lesser Dragon?"

"You know?"

"Ah, only a little."

Horn Dragon was a higher rank species of Lesser Dragon, their size was twice as large and they had horns on their heads. Lesser Dragons were only around Lv. 100, but Horn Dragons were around Lv. 200. Tiera's level was 57 from what Shin saw in the status screen, so there's no chance of winning against the dragon.

In THE NEW GATE, the maximum level of a player was 255, and the maximum level of monsters was 1000. It was about four times more than the players. This was solved by reincarnation like Shin or other high level

players. Especially Shin, or Rokuten similarly, could easily beat boss monsters and never get tired from it. But even Shin couldn't let his guard down, as a boss monster was usually Lv. 1000. So Shin didn't even feel any danger from Lv. 200 unique monsters.

"However, it is said that several elite forces of knights are needed to take on a Horn Dragon."

"Elite forces? Why do they need the elite group for something like that?"

"Shh..They are the real elite, you know. Did you see a huge rampart next to the store before you came here?"

"Ah, I think I saw it."

"That's the reinforced rampart that surrounds the Kingdom of Bayreuth. Well, the captain of the elite force of the knights group in this country is only level 158. And the Horn Dragons are about level 200, so the captain needs 40 more levels to fight it head on. And only those with a screw loose in their head will take on that monster alone, so no one can brag about it."

"158...that's...?"

"Yes, it is absurd to even challenges the Kingdom's no. 2 strongest alone."

It seems that Tiera thought Shin was surprised by the captain's high level. But actually, the level was too low. Shin thought it was absurd to have that level. And the level had barely reached the intermediate class in the player's standards. Particularly, player's standards like Shin's.

If a monster that had a higher level than Horn Dragon appeared, it might annihilate two or three countries. Shin thought.

"Well then, let's leave the store so that we can see whether the curse is gone."

"Wait, didn't you hear my story?"

"I heard it. It's better to find out now if there are any more problems."

"Not gonna happen. What if a Horn Dragon attacked us?"

“Oh.”

“…….Hey, just to make sure, what is your level?”

“I’m level 255?”

“……”

Both of them went silent. Shin said it honestly, but it seems that Tiera doubted him.

“Tiera?”

“255…? Same as master?”

“Ah yes, my level is 255, same as Schnee.”

“Really?”

“Yes.”

“Is it really true?”

“It is true.”

“Really hone――”

“Yes! yes! I’ve said it many times!”

“――st…”

The conversation stopped before it became a truth battle.

“Are you able to use【Analyze】? If you can, then you can see my stats too.”

“I can’t. Only the skill successor can use it.”

“What’s a skill successor?”

“…I begin to doubt your common sense.”

If he was a resident of this world, he would know that too. But Shin, who arrived in this world just a while ago, didn't know anything about common sense. Rather, he just assumed it was the same as in the game and went with the flow.

"Even if it's said to be common sense, I do not understand it well because I lived far from human villages for a long time."

Since he couldn't say that he was in a game before coming here, he decided to say that he lived as a hermit. It was the most likely excuse for his ignorance of this world, thought Shin.

"I understand. I will tell you everything you need to know, just ask if you have something you don't understand."

"Thank you."

Shin bowed his head to express his gratitude while Tiera said "Somehow…".

"First of all, the skill successor. Because the people who can read the symbols are lost along with the skills. Skills can only be inherited nowadays. A lot of skills were lost during the 'Dusk of the Majesty' and currently, less than 100 skills still remain."

"Less than 100, huh?…"

Shin unable to hide his surprise for that number. THE NEW GATE was known for its numerous skills, and the number coming out of Tiera's mouth was not even 1/10 of the total amount of skills.

"Nowadays, skills are used to gain personal benefit. The people who make a living by fighting, such as adventurers and knights, are using weakened skills which are called Arts. Though it has the same name with as the original skill, its power and effect only amounts to 1/3 of the original. The magic my master showed to me was 'Magic Skills', but I can only use 'Magic Arts'. And naturally the power gap is huge."

"I see, the skills that turned weak are called arts. Is there a separate level in arts?"

Some level in skills have their own setting. Shin activated【Analyze・Ⅹ】. He immediately understood the skill right away, because the letter of Ⅰ~Ⅹ was attached after the skill name. The lowest was Ⅰ, and the highest was Ⅹ. This setting system was almost nonexistent in combat skills, and most support skills were using this setting system.

"As far as I know, arts do not have levels like skills."

"It will be hard to fight using arts..."

Shin couldn't help to think that it's difficult to fight using arts, as skills were more favorable than arts.

"You can use skills, right? What skills are you able to use? Just now you used one, didn't you? How many skills can you use? 2? 3? No way!! Is it 4!?"

"Indeed, one digit is too few. I'm certain that I can use at least 1000 or more. Although I don't know the exact number, because I never counted them."

"What? 1000? Did I hear it wrong?"

Tiera tilted her head and thought whether Shin was making a joke or not. It felt like a joke, because it strayed too much from this world's common sense, even though the joke was the truth.

"Do you have the【Analyze】skill by chance? I can lend it to you, although the skill is only level Ⅰ, so it can't see my limit break level, but it wouldn't hurt to have it either. Well, I'll use the skill【Secret Books Creation】."

"?"

Tiera looked puzzled as Shin once again moved his hand in the air.

"Creation successful."

"..."

"Wha, what is this?"

Shin handed a scroll to Tiera. Various potential derivation of skills mastery could be learned and benefited if the skill proficiency was raised to a certain level. One of the benefits of【Secret Books Creation】was that it was possible to creates items.【Secret Books Creation】was able to make scrolls. When【Secret Books Creation】was used, it was possible for other player to learn the skill from the book.

Although it's reasonable, various restrictions were imposed to the skill, such as the number of skills that could be made was fixed, players couldn't learn the skill if the acquisition condition were not met, and so forth.

To begin with,【Secret Books Creation】also had some skills that were impossible to make. As there were only few strong skills that could be created by【Secret Books Creation】. High class skills from【Secret Books Creation】were limited to low-level, and there was a level restriction too.

【Analyze】wasn't technically seen a skill. Even the restrictions from【Secret Books Creation】were kept at a minimum. So Shin could share the skill with other players unlimited because of this. It was one of the reasons why he made that scroll.

"The secret book of【Analyze】. If you read this, you will be able to use this skill."

Because【Secret Books Creation】was usable for a support character, Shin thought of making good use of it. However, he intended to apologize if it didn't work. These kind of things wouldn't be understood if he didn't try it.

"Can the skill be used after this? But I don't have anything of equivalent value to this." "Equivalent value?"

Shin was going to give it for free, but Tiera seems didn't get it. Apparently, skills were a substantially valuable thing in this world.

"I told you, didn't I? Skills are valuable too. Anyhow, one would need a large sum of money for an apprentice like me to get a skill from a master. And you will give this to me for free?"

"Eh, It is, even though I was going to say it. Did I do something wrong?"

"For the time being, please refrain from raising this matter to anyone.

Because it could become a serious matter. Depending on the situation, one life might be targeted."

"To that extent!?"

Shin decided to instruct only the fellows he trusted with the skills from【Secret Books Creation】, as he never thought that his life could be targeted by someone.

"Well, don't get too scared. I think Tiera will be safe, so have you read it yet?"

"No, after I use it, will there be any compensation claims?"

"No!!"

Am I an evil swindler!? Shin wanted to retort. However, because there was the possibility of one life getting targeted, it was normal to be cautions.

"Giving away a skill for free is your modus operandi, isn't it?"

"If that's the case, then I should have made a high-class skill to deceive you."

"To me, even this skill is very valuable. It must be a great feeling to have several skills."

"But I cannot use arts. And I thought this is natural, so I have no feelings about it, because I think I possessed all the skills."

"What a 'luxurious agony'...well, whatever. I'll receive it without reservation then."

"Ah, don't worry about it. It would be rather embarrassing if you didn't take it."

Tiera took the scroll and seemed convinced for the time being. Shin urged her to read it, so she opened it and took a look at the scroll.

When she began to read it, a light wrapped Tiera's body and faded after 10 seconds. This was the effect when a skill was acquired. And apparently

the skill learning process had been completed.

"How is it?"

Shin was anxious because he didn't know if【Secret Books Creation】would work in this world. That's why he needed to test it.

"Somehow it is a mysterious feeling.【Analyze】showed up in my head after I opened the scroll, and something like flows special effect coming out. However, there is no unpleasantness."

"Eh, is that so?"

Shin was relieved as the skill was successfully learned. From here on, he would keep that in mind in case he used it again.

"I can see your name, but the other stats have a weird symbol on them."

"As expected, the name is visible. Well, the weird symbol is called question mark. It will only show when the level difference is huge. So it's common not seeing the stats."

"Eh, originally the name is not visible. But now that I gained a skill, I can see it, although your stats are hidden because of the level difference. This skill more or less shows that you are indeed strong."

"Will you believe me now? I will keep you safe from monsters when you go out of the store."

"I have no choice but to consider what we have done till now, so I'll believe in you."

Tiera seemed more willing to believe in Shin thanks to the skill【Analyze】that she had learned. There might be some uneasiness of course, since Tiera had constantly been attacked by monsters up till now.

"I'll go out first to check the surrounding area just in case. After that, please come out."

"Okay, sure."

Shin went out of Tsuki no Hokora and looked at the surrounding area to make sure there were no monsters around. 【Search】 also confirmed that there were no monsters in the vicinity.

"All clear, you can come out now!"

Tiera peeked outside the door as she looked at the surroundings.

At Tsuki no Hokora, there were skill barriers – 【Barrier • X】 and 【Wall • X】 set by Schnee. The 【Barrier • X】 could prevent monsters from Lv. 900 to 1000 (Depends on the user's levels) from attacking the store, and even if they attacked, the invisible wall could counterattack.

And 【Wall • X】could prevent player intrusion (Also depends on the user's level) from level 230-255. Because both of them were of the highest level, the invasion was impossible even with 【Cut Through】.

By the way, for 【Wall • X】, it's necessary to set the setting permission so that general guests weren't mistaken for invaders. Players were prohibited using weapons and combat skills in Tsuki no Hokora. When Shin was the store owner before, he went into details, such as preventing players from equipping weapons.

At present, the radius of the barrier skills were around 20 mels. (T/N: In case you forgot, 1 mel = 1 meter)

"Come, over here."

"Ehh, okay…"

When Shin beckoned her, Tiera approached slowly. That was because Shin was standing about 1 mel from outside of the barrier.

"……"

"……"

Shin watched the surrounding area while Tiera was silent because of the nervousness.

For about 5 minutes, there was no change in the surroundings, except

warm winds that stroked their hair.

“Nothing is happening.”

“Yup, nothing happens.”

Furthermore, after 5 minutes, Shin judged that there was no problem. It was because the curse would make monsters to attack once in every 10 minutes.

“There is no monster coming.”

“Indeed.”

In the first 5 minutes, Tiera was nervous and couldn’t stop checking the surroundings.

“The curse is finally gone, right?”

“It sure is.”

Tiera replied to Shin’s question while looking up at the sky.

The sky was so vast and blue, it made Tiera’s eyes open wide. It was not compressed by the store’s windows she always saw it from.

She could feel the wind, the sunlight and smell the scent of the forest. Such nostalgic feelings spread to Tiera’s mind.

Shin felt relieved as he saw Tiera looked up at the sky. While it was still necessary to be frightened by monsters, at least she no longer needed to worry about her surroundings or troubling people. It was possible to go outside the store freely from now on.

“The sky is so wide.”

“Oh.”

Tiera muttered as she just remembered.

Then Shin looked up at the sky with Tiera for a while.

The corner of Tiera’s eyes shined as she looked at the wide sky, and Shin didn’t say anything.

“Let’s go back soon.”

Said Tiera, while Shin turned his gaze from the sky to Tiera.

“Let’s go then.”

There was no objection since they only came outside the store to confirm that the curse was dispelled from Tiera. After that, the two walked back to the store.

“Still, to really dispelled the curse.”

After she returned to the counter, Tiera muttered heartily. She still

hadn't caught up with reality.

"That was more or less because of the skill【Purification】. If anything, I was having a hard time and went through a lot of trouble to learn this rare skill."

"Any curse can be purified with【Purification】, right? To think that it was hard to get this curse dispelled."

"Why is that? Don't priests have this skill? It would be strange if they don't have one like it."

"That's not it. Because【Purification】can only be used by high-ranking priests, so I can't really ask them to meet me. Also, due to the nature of the curse, I can't come to meet them with all the monsters around."

"However, that would have been different somehow if the curse effect was stats degradation."

Tiera just said something dangerous without her realizing it. As for the stats degradation, the curse would make stats drop to 1/10 from the original. Even combating with small fry monsters would be difficult.

"Now that it is dispelled, it's useless to think about it."

"That's right. After all, you are able to roam freely again."

"Yes, although the elves dislike black hair, if the hair is not completely black-colored, it might be different story."

"Hmm? If the hair is all black-colored, it's no good?"

"Yes. I couldn't even conceal my hair when I was cursed before. The dye would turn black after some time. But now that the curse is gone, I can dye my hair again."

"Is that so."

Because the act of dyeing hair was not possible in the game, Shin didn't understand such things. To begin with, as soon as players got cursed, they immediately used items or found a priest to purify it. So the players never

needed to dye their hair.

"Ah right, this is your reward for the materials and the jewel."

Tiera placed a bag on the counter. It was swelled considerably, because there were more than 50 pieces of gold and silver coins.

"Can this fit into Item Box?"

When he tried to put it in Item Box, he saw Geyl gold coin slots in the display screen. And it also showed up 26 J gold coins and 27 J silver coins. Somehow, every coin was displayed, separated by type. It was indeed convenient.

"The coins disappeared? That's convenient."

Shin couldn't say anything but smile wryly because Tiera already said what he wanted to. That was yet another use for Item Box for items. And there was no need for a wallet.

"For the time being, I need to find an inn to stay at for today."

"Are you perhaps going to enter the Bayreuth Kingdom?"

"Yes, there are various places I would like to explore. Is there a good place to gather information?

"Well. Wait a minute, I will give you something good as an extra service."

After Tiera said so, she went to a room located behind the counter. If Shin's memory was correct, there was a private room there.

Tiera entered the room, and 3 minutes later she came out, handing a piece of paper to Shin.

"This is?"

"A letter of introduction from Tsuki no Hokora. With this letter, you can enter the country without having to wait in line for inspection."

Apparently there was a waiting line to enter the country. Shin, who

wanted to find an inn today, was feeling grateful.

"I appreciate it. I didn't want to be homeless and sleep on the street when I came here. But is this okay? To give an introduction letter to someone who you just met today."

Although Shin thought that he was not qualified, Tiera unexpectedly shook her head.

"The curse that stayed for more than 100 years was dispelled. Besides, you meet the qualifications. Moreover, I think you are a good person. There is no problem…Even with this, I still haven't returned all your favors."

"A good person…what did you say just now, I couldn't hear the latter half?"

"Geez, I don't care! I said there is no problem and please leave obediently."

Tiera said so, while pushing the letter of introduction to Shin. Although her face looked downward to conceal her reddened face, it could be seen from her ears which turned slightly red.

"All right, all right. I will take it without reservation then."

Again, Shin didn't notice it. While another person would have noticed it, he himself was a dense person.

"Then I'll go now. In addition, please take care of me the next time when purchasing the monsters I hunted."

"I understand, please don't force yourself too much. Because I'll get nothing if you die."

"See you then."

"I'll look forward to your next visit."

Tiera lowered her head and Shin waved his hand lightly while exiting the Tsuki no Hokora.

◆◆◆◆

Shin came out of Tsuki no Hokora and crossed the woods until he was in front of the ramparts and started to walk along it. Since he didn't know which way the town entrance was, he went along with his feeling. He somehow knew that he would reach the town entrance sooner or later if he just walked while following the ramparts.

"Anyway, these ramparts look really sturdy. "

Shin thought as he saw the ramparts again. Because【Analyze】was originally a skill to see the details of players and monsters, he didn't know much about its magic bestowal beyond skill level Ⅴ. But from Tiera's story, all skills were valuable and he could guess that there were excellent skill successors out there.

After walking for around 15 minutes, he could see a line formed in front of the rampart. It seemed like there was a town gate nearby.

And there were various people wearing all kinds of clothes. Furthermore, there was a human boy who wore tattered clothing, a female beast equipped with an armor and a dwarf who was accompanied by a small dragon. The person who wore a robe might be a magician, and the guy with a big wagon might be a merchant. Shin looked around while seeing the line moving slowly. Since all players in the game had a neat appearance (though there were some people who dressed in strange clothes), Shin was astonished by the scenery.

A soldier who was equipped with an armor just like a townsguard, was checking something like an identification card. Besides that, they also checked the luggage in the wagon briefly. Shin walked straight to the gate since he had a letter of introduction from Tiera.

About 20 mels from the gate, a guard noticed Shin who wasn't waiting in line, and Shin had a suspicious look on his face.

One of the guards approached Shin as he was about 10 mels from the gate.

"Hey you! If you want to get into the town, get in the line! I can't let you

enter if you don't line up."

Said the guard, while pointing at the end of the line. The line was so long that the end of the line couldn't be seen.

"Well, um, I was told I could enter the town if I show this."

He took out the letter of introduction from Item Box, while pretending to take it out from his chest pocket.

The guard took the letter from Shin, looked at the contents, and revealed a shocked look. Not to mention, his hands were trembling afterward.

"…Letter of introduction…from Tsuki no Hokora…"

"Yes, I got it from the sales clerk."

Shin didn't know why the guard was surprised, or what were the effects of a letter of introduction from Tsuki no Hokora.

He was even worried about the guard whose hands were trembling.

"I need to confirm whether this is the real thing. Come with me."

"Okay."

The guard gathered other guards and began to discuss something like 'Is it genuine?' Or 'how do we decide whether it's the real thing?'

At the same time, Shin saw a horse that was 1.5 times bigger than a normal horse, stopped at the front gate.

While Shin was looking at the horse, the guard returned.

"I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. This way."

"Ah, I understand."

The guard's manners changed completely and he became very polite. It was so sudden that it felt out of place.

(Is the letter of introduction that great?)

The road was opened for them while Shin felt stares from the people in the line. Besides that, the place was filled with people and several large wagons going in and out. Along the edge of the street, there were various stalls standing in a row, selling things like food, armor, accessories, strange items, and so on.

“I will be your guide to the adventurers’ guild. Will that be all right for you?”

“Huh? Oh, yes. Thank you very much.”

Another guard talked to Shin. It seemed like he took over the task of the guard who spoke to Shin previously.

“Do you have any plans to go somewhere else beside the guild? I’ll guide you if you don’t mind.”

“No, because there is no other plan, I would like to head toward the adventurers’ guild, and please don’t use honorifics with me.”

“Still…to be rude to those with a letter of introduction from Tsuki no Hokora.”

“No problem, just act like usual.”

“…Well, if you said so. I underst…”

“Honorific!”

“I understand, I understand, it’s just hard to adjust.” (T/N: The guard actually said “understand” in a polite tone. Then said it again in an informal tone.)

Shin didn’t mean to act big just because he got the letter of introduction by chance. Meanwhile, the guard with the guide’s role, mixed up the formal and informal tone in his speech.

“I’m glad you understand.”

“Geez, for someone to have a letter of introduction and not wanting me to be polite?”

“Well, it just felt wrong. By the way, I’m Shin. Nice to meet you.”

Shin was formerly a student. He wasn’t accustomed by an older man using honorifics toward him.

“I’m Beid. I’ve lived in this town my whole life. If you have any questions, feel free to ask.”

Beid laughed after saying that. He gave an impression of a bear because of his brown hair and beard. According to【Analyze • X】, Beid was level 100. It was said that the strongest knight was level 158, so Shin couldn’t judge whether Beid was strong or not.

“Then, I want to ask you something. Why was I being led to an adventurers’ guild?”

Even though he intended to go to the adventurers’ guild, he didn’t remember saying it to the guard. But then he recalled where he had asked Tiera for any good places to gather information.

“It was written in the introduction letter. I have to do it since it is stated in the letter of introduction from Tsuki no Hokora.”

“I see. Ah, just to confirm, is the letter of introduction from Tsuki no Hokora such a big deal?”

“Did you show it without knowing about it!?”

For some reason he was surprised.

“No, this is my first time coming to this country and it was a coincidence that I went to Tsuki no Hokora.”

“Coincidence? And got a letter of introduction? You are something…”

“I’m just a wanderer.”

“Unbelievable! No, never mind then. I don’t know about other countries,

but with the letter of introduction, it's possible to have an audience with the King. Some people have even tried to forge the letter of introduction."

It seemed the letter of introduction was a rather big deal around here.

"Tiera…this is more than an extra service…"

Shin murmured as he regretted not knowing this awesome stuff earlier. Actually, he thought it was just a simple border pass. If Beid's story was true, it was only natural that the guards were surprised.

"I'd say, it would be a problem if it got lost…"

"…Just now, someone passed it to the other guard."

Shin who just realized it, tried to get it back. But as Shin made a U-turn, he was stopped by Beid.

"It's okay, if it is the letter of introduction, I have it. How many guards can even carry it normally. It was returned before it could be left to idiots who are up to no good."

"Beid, good job!!"

Shin unconsciously gave Beid a thumbs-up. Shin's original image of him as a crude person was instantly erased, giving him a better impression of Beid.

Shin then placed the letter of introduction in the『Important Things』zone in the Item Box. This zone had an anti-theft function attached . Skills like【Steal】or【Robbery】were not effective in this zone, so Shin didn't have to worry about it getting stolen or robbed.

"Oh, I almost forgot, when you arrive at the adventurers' guild, give the letter of introduction to a receptionist named Els."

"Els?"

"The miss receptionist of the guild, and at the same time, an elf adventurer. There are some kind of ancient elven runes written on that letter. And she is the only elf in the adventurers' guild. So it is probably

addressed to her."

"I understand. I'll give it to her in the guild."

Shin didn't know that Tiera had another elf as acquaintance, yet he firmly memorized her name.

As the matter of the introduction letter was settled, Shin heard Beid's explanation about the town.

"That reminds me, this is your first time coming to this country. I will explain to you about this town. So first, this street is the rough division of the town. The gate you entered just now is the south gate. There are gates in the south, north, east and west, but only the south gate is used most often."

"Why is the south gate used mostly?"

"The reason is that the south gate is the connecting point of the districts. There is also a commercial district in front of the south gate. Besides that, the king's castle is in the center of this country, and the wealthy town residents, such as nobles and rich merchants, surround it. It is surrounded by the four districts."

"Hmm…I see…"

"The south commercial district, as said just now, generally has everything you need like foods, items, miscellaneous goods and so forth. The guilds are in the east district. Many headquarters of guilds are located there, such as adventurers' guild, merchants guild, blacksmiths guild and so on.

The west is a residential district. Almost all of the town's population live there. The inn is also a place for adventurers to replenish their stock from merchants, besides being the place to stay overnight. Finally, the north district…is in development for the time being."

Beid hesitated as he talked about the north district. Shin had an idea about it, so he asked Beid daringly.

"Is the development only a name, or is it a slum area?"

“As expected, you understand indeed. Yes, it is. Although I said it’s in a development zone, eventually those with no place to go started to move in one after another. Though each of them have their own motives. Anyway, its security is at the worst, and it’s better to stay away from there.”

Beid advised Shin with a bitter expression.

However, it was not only this country, but most big countries also have such places.

Meanwhile, Shin observed the town situation as he listened to Beid. In the commercial district, various people were coming and going, Shin saw a man with an appearance of an adventurer. The man was carrying a large sword and wore a full body armor.

Shin was excited and almost called out to him , especially after he saw the man was carrying a Dragon Sword. Beid said it was a weapon from an island country called ‘Hinomoto’, which is in the east of the continent.

In the meantime, Shin arrived at the adventurers’ guild. The building was larger than the neighboring building, and had a signboard with a sword and a spear crossed were painted. Somehow, this was the representation of the adventurers’ guild.

“My duty ends here. Don’t work yourself too hard in there.”

“Oh, thank you for guiding me here, and for the information as well.”

Shin went into the adventurers’ guild building after seeing off Beid who lightly waved his hand.

He opened the guild’s door and entered.

From the entrance door, the receptionist desk could be seen on the right side, and the bar on the left side. At the center hall, there was a bulletin board which had many requests posted on it.

Since rowdy NPCs often hung around in adventurers’ guilds when he played the game, Shin had that image when entering the guild. Nevertheless, no garbage could be seen on the floor, nor adventurers shouting at each other, nor glares from other adventurers.

It was merely a group of adventurers who had just finished their tasks and were having a toast. The bar seemed to be just a normal bar.

Shin went straight toward the receptionist desk, even though he felt hungry after seeing the bar.

“Welcome to the adventurers’ guild, how can I help you today?”

The beautiful woman who was the receptionist greeted Shin as he approached. She had light brown hair that reached her shoulders. Apparently, the reception desk of guilds were always filled with beautiful women.

There was also a tall man with a height of about 2 mels and scars on his face next to the receptionist. It goes without saying, Shin casually detoured to the woman’s side at the reception.

“I would like to register as an adventurer.”

“For that, please go upstairs on your left and head over to the second room. One J silver coin is required for the initial registration, is that alright with you?”

“Yes, it’s alright. Thank you.”

He voiced his gratitude and went up the stairs. Without stopping, Shin was thinking that there was no such procedure during the game. Then he saw the second room and entered it.

Shin approached the desk on the middle, as there were only three desks.

“We provide registration for adventurers here. You want to register as an adventurer, is that correct?”

“Ah, yes, I want to register as an adventurer.”

He replied to the receptionist with a bewildered look. Shin was confused, as the receptionist’s face and that of the receptionist below, were like two peas in a pod. The only difference was that this receptionist had her hair in a ponytail.

“Is something the matter?”

“No, you just look identical to the receptionist below.”

“That is my older sister. Because we are twins, I am often mistaken as her. I will be helping you register today. My name is Cilica Lindt. Please treat me well.”

“I am Shin. Please take care of me as well.”

“First, you will need to pay the initial cost of one J silver coin.”

“Okay.”

He took out one J silver coin from Item Box. Shin thought it looked a little unnatural since he took it out from his chest, but Cilica received the coin without any suspicion.

“Then, please fill out this form.”

In the document, there were entries to be filled up such as name, race, main weapon, able to use magic or not, and so on.

“Do I have to fill out everything?”

“No, only your name and race are required. While it would be easier to receive support if you fill it all out, we won’t force you as this is not compulsory. No one will treat you differently because of it. So please rest assured.”

“Okay.”

Since there was an entry for place of birth, Shin just had to skip it, because he was not from this world. The race was filled as a human just in case.

Main weapon was sword, able to use magic, and because there was entry for age, one year of the death game was added in his true age, so he wrote down as 21 years old.

It was a bit late to bring it up now, but the document was written in

Japanese. The spoken language was Japanese, so it was only natural that it was also being used in the document. Shin was thankful because of it. He was worried in the beginning, as he thought it would be written with characters like wriggling earthworms.

After that, he gave the document to Cilica, and she just skimmed it through. She was probably checking if it was incomplete.

“Your name is Shin-sama, is that right?”

“Yes. That’s right.”

“Then the document is complete. Next, please drip one drop of blood on this card.

Cilica handed Shin a needle and a silver card.

Shin pricked the tip of his finger and dripped the blood on the card. The card didn’t reject the blood and absorbed it like a sponge.

“With this, the procedure is complete. The card will take one day to process, so it will be ready by tomorrow.”

“Okay.”

It seemed that he would need to wait until tomorrow before receiving his card.

“Would you like hear more information about the guild?”

“Yes, please.”

“First of all, adventurers are divided by ranks, from the highest SS to S, A, B, C, D, E, F, and the lowest G rank. Because Shin-sama just registered, your rank is G. Whenever a request is completed, the point is added and your rank will rise accordingly. If a request is failed or abandoned, the point for the request is subtracted from the current point. The rank will drop if the points are below a certain standard. In addition, you must pay the cancellation fee twice of the reward offered. You can receive requests up to two ranks above you. You can only receive requests one rank above you if you become rank C and above. You can form a party with two or more

members. It is also possible to participate in the request of the top three or more rank. Depending on the members, you will receive the request according to the members of the top rank."

"What is the maximum number of members allowed in a party?"

Shin asked since he was interested. The maximum number of people in a party was six people during the game.

"One party can be formed by up to six members. It becomes a form called joint work, where you cross multiple parties when you receive a request for further numbers of people. This is usually seen on subjugation requests of strong monsters, or fairly large-scale requests."

It seemed that the number of party members remained unchanged. However, the request (it was called Quest in the game) for further numbers of people seemed different from the game, there was no joint work or multiple parties.

"There are various kinds of requests such as miscellaneous duties, fishing, subjugation, escort, and so forth. Please be warned that the guild won't take responsibility for taking a request without the guild's approval. An unsuitable request for your ability is likely to receive or sustain severe injuries or even death."

"What will happen if the request and the contents are different? If a subjugation request is received and upon getting there, the monster is stronger than the request said."

"In such case, it's fine to abandon the request. You need to report it, so that the penalty will not occur. Even if the guild verifies all the risky requests, please do not take it without precautions, as not all requests can be covered."

'The management seemed to lack of efficiency. But since the information network wasn't developed, it couldn't be helped', Shin thought.

"The guild will buy the raw materials from subjugated monster. It's a good source for extra income. Next——"

The explanation from Cilica lasted for about 20 minutes. Even if Shin

heard everything, he could not memorize all of it.

"——That's all for today. I'll explain again about the guild card tomorrow when you receive it. Do you have any questions?"

"Can I receive requests now?"

"After the guild card is issued, you can accept requests right away. Because the guild card also acts as a border pass, I advise that you spend the night in the town."

"I see. I don't have any more questions."

"Well, that's it for today. I wish for Shin-sama's success."

Cilica executed a graceful bow, and Shin left the counter.

Shin went down the stairs and spoke with the receptionist who guided him before.

"Thank you for the help a little while ago."

"The procedure was completed, I see. Well then, again, Welcome to the Adventurers' Guild. My name is Celica Lindt, I am responsible for the request procedures. My best regards in the future."

"I am Shin. Same here. Are you the elder sister of Cilica from the registration counter?"

"So it was Cilica in charge. Well, yes, I am the older sister of Cilica. Because we are twins, we look very alike."

"I was surprised. I thought you could teleport instantly."

"It is possible for a person coming here for the first time to have that curious look on their face when they return, just like that person over there."

Shin followed Celica's gaze after she said that. It was the figure of a new adventurer, who left the guild while tilting his head. He was the person next to Shin when he received an explanation earlier.

“And I often get mistaken for my sister, even in the guild. I hope Shin-sama won’t mix us up, too.”

Shin momentarily felt the pressure from Celica’s smile. As a matter of fact, Shin probably thought it was troublesome to pay attention to it.

“Still, I will do my best. Ah, can I ask you a question?”

Shin asked as he just recalled what Beid said to him. However, the big man next to Celica threw a glance at Shin a couple of times for some reason. Shin’s intuition was sounding alarms, but he decided to ignore it for now.

“Yes, feel free to ask.”

“I heard that adventurer named Els works here as receptionist.”

There were only two people (Celica and the big man) in the receptionist desk. Shin wanted to say ‘Miss’ before the receptionist, but was unable to, due to the big man next to Celica.

“I’m sorry, Els just received a request and is out-of-town right now. She will return today if no trouble occurs. Please ask again when you receive the guild card tomorrow. If she is not available, then I will pass her a message.”

Apparently, Shin got the wrong timing. Since she was an adventurer, she might not always here.

Shin was hoping for a better luck tomorrow.

“I see, then I will come again tomorrow.”

Celica bowed slightly and then Shin headed to the bar. He hadn’t eaten since he was transported to this world.

There were several guests in the bar besides the group of adventurers before. The average level was around 90.

Shin found a seat in a less crowded area. He then read the menu. Although the menu was written in Japanese, he didn’t understand what kind of dish would be served, so he just asked for today’s recommended set.

“Today’s recommended set, Shin-sama.”

“Oh, ah, yes…?”

Shin turned around and faced the waitress. He didn’t know why the waitress knew his name, then he saw the waitress’s face.

It was Celica with whom he just parted a while ago.

“EH!…weren’t you the receptionist just now?”

“Yes.”

“But you are wearing a different dress.”

“Yes, I wear the uniform of the guild at the reception desk.”

“Did you change your clothes?”

“Of course.”

“Isn’t that too fast? And why a waitress?”

“It’s normal to change clothes like this. Sometimes, I work here to help when the receptionist desk isn’t crowded.”

That’s not normal…Shin wanted to retort. It had only been 3 minutes since he left the receptionist desk, and then Celica appeared. He couldn’t help but think it was impossible.

After a while, a dish was served which consisted of a steak with a thickness of about 3 cemels, a salad of raw vegetables, and a soup. It was not a dish that could be cooked in a short time.

In the meantime, no one seemed to go to the receptionist desk since Celica left, so only the big man was there. Shin could sympathize with the adventurers who were taking requests at this time.

“Please help yourself to the dish.”

“Well, itadakimasu.”

Shin said so and started eating. For some reason, Celica settled herself on the seat in front of Shin.

(Wha…what is this development?…)

It couldn't be helped, but it was uncomfortable to eat while being stared at.

Anyway, the dish was delicious, especially the steak. The salad had a pleasant texture, the stewed chicken meat was crispy and the soup was quite good.

However, the situation was quite uncomfortable. He couldn't enjoy his meal.

"Is it okay for other customers to be left waiting, Celica-san?"

"It's alright, another waitresses can serve them."

It seemed that she didn't want to leave.

"Though it's hard to eat while being stared at…"

"Please don't mind me."

"That's impossible, you know…"

She just replied with a smile. She said not to mind her, but Shin still felt uncomfortable.

"Haa, what is it, really? Is this harassment against newcomers?"

"Actually, there is something I want to confirm."

"Then please say so from the beginning."

"I just wanted to see what kind of person you are before that."

Still, Shin thought he was being made fun of.

"Well? What is it that you want to confirm?"

Shin said so, and Celica answered in a lowered voice.

"Yes, I received a report that Shin-sama has a letter of introduction from a certain place."

Shin only heard the words 'letter of introduction', and he could understand. Apparently, this was more important than Shin thought.

"Ah, is that so? I certainly have it."

"Would it be okay for you if we go to another room to confirm the letter of introduction?"

"If I can finish my meal first, then it's okay. Although I have to decline unless the guild master is there."

"....."

Shin said that as a joke, however Celica had become silent unexpectedly. In addition, he could felt her gaze wander around.

"...Well, it was a joke"

"...I'm sorry, I was asked by the guild master to take you there."

"Seriously?"

"Yes"

From her firm voice, Shin could confirm that it was the truth. He felt disheartened, as he had to meet the highest authority in the guild on his first day.

"...Can't we do it tomorrow?"

He secretly sighed, because it was an abnormal event to meet a guild master on his first day after coming to this world.

"Again, I'm sorry, but..."

Celica looked behind Shin after she said that.

The guild master was there behind Shin.

(Fuh, want me to turn around…ehhhhh!!!)

Shin knew there was someone behind him, but he didn't think it was the guild master. He turned around reluctantly, and regretted his futile decision.

The person who stood behind Shin was an unexpected person.

"……"

"I couldn't wait anymore. I am sorry to disturb you while you're eating. Hahaha"

It was the big man from the receptionist desk who just talked and laughed.

It was the big man who was throwing glances at Shin.

It was the big man who made Shin's intuition send warning signs.

In other words, it was the big man.

"Hey, it's you?!"

He was surprised that he used an informal tone unconsciously.

"I heard the report and I wanted to meet you immediately."

The big man, who was said to be the guild master, talked with a smile.

"Barlux-sama. If you could just wait a little longer…"

"Not this one. After all, this is a thing to be worried about. Shin-kun, right? I'm Barlux. It may be a bit sudden, but can you come to my room?"

Apparently, Barlux was the name of the guild master. Speaking of guild master, Shin was surprised as he imagined a person of old age. The guild master's appearance looked like a man in his late 30s to early 40s. There was a big scar on his face, if combined with his large stature, he gave of the

feeling of intimidation right away. Despite that, he had this friendly smile which reduced the intimidating feeling by half.

Yet, his level was 228, the highest level he had seen in this world.

“Haa, though I don’t mind, please let me finish my meal first.”

“Of course, sorry about that. I’ll be waiting in my room.”

Barlux went back to his room after he said that.

“As a guild master, he looks pretty young. I thought some old man would be the leader in this place. Ah, so in this case, is an old man’s experiences not significant here?”

Shin talked based on the images he had in games and novels.

“I understand your thought. What Shin-sama said is not entirely wrong. In fact, most of the guild masters in other cities are elderly persons. Nevertheless, Barlux-sama is a former S rank adventurer, so his experience and connections are not inferior to the other guild masters.

“Former S rank, huh?”

Shin was still ignorant about this world’s common sense, but he could still imagine that the road to rank S wasn’t easy. If viewed from that level, that person would be considered a guild master.

He finished his meal while thinking about such things.

At the same time, he felt glances from everywhere after the appearance of the guild master. And then, he proceeded to the reception desk, guided by Celica.

There were rooms behind the reception desk, the room which Shin was guided to had complete furniture for a guest such as sofa, table, desk and bookshelf. Although Shin didn’t know its price, it gave the impression of first-class goods.

“Welcome to the adventurers’ guild. I’m sorry, I was rude earlier. I am Barlux Heim, the guild master.”

When Shin entered the room, Barlux shook Shin's hand while he introduced himself.

"I am Shin. My best regards to you."

Shin could feel that the hand he shook was stiff and rugged, and it was definitely powerful.

"Please take a seat."

Shin sat on the sofa while Celica served tea on the table.

"Shin-kun. Although it's a bit sudden, I want to see the letter of introduction from Tsuki no Hokora."

"Here."

The letter of introduction was taken out from Item Box, and he gave it to Barlux. At the same time, Barlux placed another paper on the table. Then, a pattern of a crescent moon that was drawn on the center of the letter, shined in silver.

"This is…?"

"The letter of introduction from Tsuki no Hokora is a little special. The magic of the introduction letters will resonate if brought near each other. The crest will shine like this. In other words, this letter of introduction is genuine."

From Barlux's explanation, it seemed to be the method of confirmation for the letter of introduction. And it appeared to be impossible to produce an imitation, as it would be found out right away.

"So it had this feature…"

Although he was astonished at the unexpected function, Shin couldn't help but think that he should had gotten an explanation when he received it.

"No one told you about it?"

“I received it as an extra service, as a border pass.”

“Service…? Was it Schnee who gave it to you, or Tiera?”

“It was Tiera. Schnee was away.”

“Tiera huh. I think something outstanding must have happened, that she forgot to explain this, but she has good eyes for people though. Even I too, have seen a lot of people but she is always one step ahead.”

Barlux said as he laughed.

And it was true that something outstanding happened to Tiera, like a more than 100 years old curse was dispelled.

Still, were the eyes for people acquired through the wisdom of age?

“Fuh!”

As Shin thought about age, dread chilled up his spine.

The smiling face of Tiera with a background of flames came into his mind.

(Let’s stop thinking about age, I think it will be fatal…)

Because he had a bad premonition, he stopped thinking about it.

“? What’s the matter?”

“Ah, nothing.”

“Is that so? Then let’s continue the story from where I left off before.”

Said Barlux as he corrected his posture. It looked like this would be where the main subject would start.

“Because you haven’t heard the explanation, I’ll explain the uses of the letter myself. With the letter of introduction, it is possible to enter most countries without inspection. If it has information, it will be treated as final information. Each guild will even accommodate it differently. Also, in Bayreuth, you can even have an audience with the king. It will also serve as

reliable identification."

There was no doubt that what Beid was saying before was true. Although he didn't talk about the guild or the information.

"The letter of introduction has that many uses. So naturally, there will be someone who will intend to snatch or steal it from you."

"That makes sense..."

It could be misused for terrorism, smuggling of dangerous material, assassination and so on. Judging from a criminal's and a crime syndicate's viewpoint, they would desire it very badly.

"Therefore, I want you to tell me if you have the capability to protect it. If you can't protect it, I suggest that you destroy it now."

"....."

Shin was thinking. With this letter of introduction, there would be advantages and disadvantages.

As for the advantages, it would become easier for him to cross the countries. And he could obtain trust from the country easily.

However, the disadvantage would be the danger from getting targeted of certain individuals or organizations.

At least, the advantages were indispensable for Shin. At the time of explanation of the guild by Cilica, he heard that entry to every country would become relatively easy if he had a guild card.

However, he considered that there was a difference in a moment of peril, and that there should be one that could strongly guarantee his identity in the case of an emergency.

There was also a demerit, as he was already known to the guards when he came to the town, and also to the people who were lining up at the southern gate. Besides, he was already known to the guild. He didn't know the extent of protection of confidential information here, even if it was already exposed. Rather, it would be better if he acted just like normal.

(I will put it in the『Important Things』zone in my Item Box just in case, and avoid taking it out generously.)

From Tiera's story, only a few people have an Item Box. In the『Important Things』, even members of 'Rokuten' could not remove items he placed inside.

Although he didn't have any way to confirm it.

"I can protect it."

He concluded after thinking about it for a while.

"Is that your decision?"

"Yes."

"You won't regret this, will you?"

"Of course I won't. Though I know that if I make mistakes, it will be bad for me and the store. If I was entrusted with this important thing, then I'll make sure to fulfill that trust."

Shin said confidently.

After all, he had decided on the answer before he thought about the issue of advantages and disadvantages.

Some might think that what Shin was doing was reckless and dangerous, but unfortunately, Shin's life was targeted a lot. Shin obtained experiences that could deal with assassination and surprise attacks from surviving one year in THE NEW GATE, which had turned into a death game.

Even though his true intention was that he didn't want to destroy the letter.

"Whew, well said. As expected from someone who holds the letter of introduction."

"Though it was a bit exaggerated."

“Too much modesty is not good. Once you hesitate, you will lose in life.”

“What does that mean?”

That was the guild master’s view, it seemed. That person could not be made light of.

“Hmm, how high is your level? I had to overcome numerous battles myself, until I almost reached the limit, yet I still can’t declare what you just did. I can understand that you are considerably strong.”

Indeed, he was a former S rank. He seemed to possess the ability to see through other’s capability, even if he didn’t have the skills.

“...must I answer it?”

“I’m sorry, but the guild needs to have a grasp on the level of an adventurer. Just the range of your level is sufficient. I cannot allow low-level adventurers to do dangerous requests.”

It appeared that Barlux said that not just out of curiosity.

He might need to confirm it not only as a person, but also for the guild, as the expectation of ability correlates to some degree if the level was known.

“I understand. My level is more than 150.”

“Hmm. Shin-kun, as I said just now, modesty is prohibited.”

Barlux raised one eyebrow after hearing Shin’s level. As expected from the guild master, he seemed to know if the level was too low.

“Is it not good enough?”

“It is not good, the level you said just now is far lower than your original level.”

Even though he didn’t want to say it smoothly because he heard the No. 2 was level 158, he was unable to deceive him.

“So you can tell without using【Analyze】”

“I’ve seen many adventurers as a guild master.”

“There’s no helping it, huh. My level is more than 200.”

Still, Shin didn’t want to admit his true level. He just added 50 levels to what he declared earlier.

“Hah!”

“Amazing…”

Barlux visibly showed an impressed smile as Shin told him his level again. Celica, who stood near the wall, unintentionally voiced her amazement.

“Is it something to be surprised about?”

Shin knew that Barlux was also above level 200, so that should not have surprised him.

“Although it was written in the document, you are 21 years old, correct?”

“Yes.”

“It’s not very often you meet a person who surpasses level 200 in their youth like you. I wonder if you and this country’s no. 1 can fight evenly.”

Although level 150 seemed to be too low, 200 in contrast, seemed too high.

“What is the current no. 1 person’s level?”

“It’s 230. She is the second princess of this country.”

“Are you serious?”

A strong princess!!! Shin wanted to retort.

(The princess is stronger than the captain of the elite forces…)

Because Barlux said the No. 1 of the country, he thought it might be the king or prince, or even a royal guard, but never a second princess.

“Isn’t there too much of a level difference with the knights? I heard from Tiera that the captain of the elite forces is level 158.”

“Captain of elite forces? Ah, you mean the leader of the knights? His level rose to 188 now. Maybe Tiera hasn’t heard about it since she is in the store all the time.”

“Still, the princess is No. 1…”

“It is because the second princess is in the fighter faction. Besides, she is quite popular and often makes an appearance in the town.”

“Is it safe for a royal family member to come into town?”

“The levels of the hooligans around there can’t even be compared to her level.”

It seemed that the strongest in the kingdom wasn’t just for show. The Horn Dragon that went out with Tiera’s story would had been killed if she fought it.

“Well then, Shin-kun. Actually, there is one more thing I want to confirm, if it is okay with you?”

“…It will depend on the subject”

Shin had an unpleasant foreboding about this.

“It’s simple. I want you to have a match with me.”

“I’m sorry, may I return now?”

“Unfortunately, you can’t.”

“I can’t?”

“It’s regrettable, but you don’t have the right to deny my request.”

Barlux told him plain and simple. He probably wanted to see Shin’s capability . He knew that it wasn’t necessary to be capable, even if Shin was a high level person.

“Somehow, my foreboding feeling came true.”

“I’m so sorry. I want to confirm it for the guild personally. No, I have to see it for myself.”

Shin frowned as his premonition came true.

Because of the glances he received at receptionist desk, he only felt a combative intention from Barlux’s eyes.

But somehow, he ignored Barlux’s intention. Though Shin also wanted to see the capability of a former S rank adventurer.

“…Yes, sir. I can understand that you won’t have a peace of mind if you don’t confirm my capability.”

When it was made public that Shin possessed a letter of introduction, Shin had to show that he had the capabilities to protect it.

“Where will we fight?”

“There is a training room that only guild members can use. That’s where we’re gonna fight. Do you need time to get ready?”

“No, I’m ready anytime.”

“Well then, let’s go there immediately.”

He arrived at a room about the same size as the one earlier after following Barlux. There was no furniture in the room, only a crystal about the size of a soccer ball, floating in the center of the room.

It resembled the transition point Shin often saw during the game.

“There is a training area in the basement. We can go there from this transition point.”

Apparently, the transition point seemed intact. It could be used by touching the crystal and saying the location.

Subsequently, they arrived in a place that had a considerable area like a

Colosseum. It had a resting place, a training area inside the plaza, and an audience seating, except there were currently no adventurers around.

“There is no one here, is it always like this?”

“No, this is the second training area that is used for a special case like this. Common adventurers are training in first training area. Outsider can’t enter here without permission.”

“Is that so…”

It appeared that Shin didn’t have to worry about his surroundings. It was a great help, since Shin didn’t want to stand out.

“Then, shall we begin?”

As he said that, Barlux’s whole body was wrapped with blue light. The light disappeared after one second, and Barlux was equipped with light blue armor and gauntlets. The light blue armor appeared to be much thinner the a common light armor, it seemed to emphasize the easiness of movement. On the contrary, the gauntlets were heavy blue armor, that covered the fingers to the elbows.

It seemed that the equipment items for the arm showed a glove of Japanese style, the displayed gauntlet was of Western style. It might not be a significant difference, but there were slight additional bonuses for glove to AGI and gauntlet to VIT. The purpose of Barlux in wearing gauntlets might be to compensate for the thin armor.

According to【Analyze】, Barlux’s job was, not surprisingly, a fist fighter. Shin was more surprised by the sudden equip of the armor and gauntlets, like a transformation hero.

In THE NEW GATE, the armor and gauntlets were equipped in the same way, too. The light formed and materialized after that. The reason was so it could perfectly fit into the avatar’s physique. Hence, this is why Shin had been avoiding wearing armor like Barlux, because it was flashy.

“…(There was such an item, huh?)”

“What the matter?”

"No, nothing."

He had nothing to say about Barlux's equipment scene, as it was a common scene anyway.

Shin didn't have anything particularly to be equipped. To some extent, he wouldn't use weapons since he understood the power of his opponent to some degree.

"Then, here I go!!"

In an instant, Barlux's figure became blurry. Though the distances between the two of them was about 10 mels, he closed up to 5 mels in a blink and charged towards Shin.

"Those equipment are good and fast."

If Shin had been without the bonus speed he obtained from Human reincarnation, he would lose against the equipment' speed.

"Whew!!"

"Whew!"

The sound of wind cutting could be heard as they unleashed their fists towards each other. Barlux's equipment was confirmed.

Light armor【Light Blue Crystal Armor】and gauntlet【Blue Fang Gauntlet】, Shin thought. It was definitely not a mistake, as Shin had sold both of them in the store before.

"Those are good equipments."

"I had a hard time…obtaining…and put it on as it is…!"

Barlux said, while frowning, as he unleashed his fists to Shin, but Shin eluded them.

【Light Blue Crystal Armor】was a rare armor with high AGI.

And the【Blue Fang Gauntlet】was a special unique weapon with high

offensive power. It was made from the raw material of a unique monster of Lv. 600 named Blue Mitt Hound.【Blue Fang Gauntlet】was often equipped by high level players that used bare hands martial arts.

“As expected, to be able to fend off my attacks easily.”

Barlux momentarily stopped his vigorous attack and distanced himself from Shin. He was talking while smiling wryly, but his eyes remained sharp to ascertain Shin’s next move.

Whereas, Shin didn’t actively attack the distanced Barlux, because he was wary about the ability of the gauntlet.

Besides high offensive power, its other ability was【When defending an attack using the gauntlet, the attacker receives 1/10 of his attack damage】. But there was a limitation in the gauntlet, it would only execute this ability if the wearer’s STR values was 100 or more, higher than the opponent’s.

Shin was watching the【Blue Fang Gauntlet】and noticed the effect wasn’t activated.

(I might know his equipment better than he does. As both of our levels are more than 200, added with some bonuses, the STR didn’t reach the 100 difference. Besides, prying about it is troublesome. I want to end it in one shot.)

Shin was not in the mood to respond to the guild master’s talks.

“What are you thinking about?”

“I’m thinking how to attack, since you are strong.”

“Fuh, just from the fighting just now, you seem to know my equipment already. Only a few people who know about it still remain.”

“Well, what to do.”

While they were exchanging banter, Shin was thinking what to do next.

What he understood from the earlier fight, was that Barlux was a bare handed type. Although his range of attack was short, Barlux’s bare handed style excelled in attack speed, and the attack speed would rise with the effect from【Light Blue Crystal Armor】. Therefore making it more difficult

to defeat him.

(That gauntlet is troublesome…should I give it a try?)

He checked his skills and took a stance.

Barlux reacted to his movement, but Shin stepped forward quicker.

Shin left an afterimage after dashing towards Barlux. His steps shattered the soil as Shin jumped onto the air.

“Shuss!!”

In one breath, the distance of his right hand reached the target. Because it was an attack without a feint, Barlux reflexively defended with his gauntlet.

(He’s taking it!)

Shin began with conviction.

On the verge of his fist hitting the gauntlet, Shin changed the direction of his momentum and executed a sweep kick with his left leg.

“Guh!”

Though Barlux tried to reduce the damage by moving to the left, his reaction was delayed by Shin’s fist.

As a result, Barlux flew into the air.

【Blue Fang Gauntlet】 effects didn’t activate, because Shin didn’t hit it directly, so he didn’t have to worry about his damage being reflected.

Shin gripped Barlux’s gauntlet, which was defenseless now, and used the martial art skill【Willow Throw】.

【Willow Throw】 was a technique of super low damage for capturing monster. So Shin didn’t have to worry about Barlux receiving fatal wounds. He used the skill without any hesitation.

The body of Barlux was thrown in the air and slammed onto the ground almost instantly. And then, Shin locked Barlux's joint so he could not move.

"Phew. For now let us stop this, shall we?"

After confirming that Barlux couldn't move, Shin asked. The match would not end quickly if they had the same stats.

"No way, to be easily suppressed like this. Though, I wonder about the last technique you used?"

"That's a secret. It's not a good idea to reveal too much of one's ability."

"Hahaha, that is certainly right. It's my defeat. You have shown me your abilities. And I don't need to be worried anymore."

Barlux stood up and extended his right hand to Shin.

"?"

"The handshake earlier was as a guild master. And this handshake is for the people who are recognized by Tsuki no Hokora."

"I see."

Shin nodded and returned his handshake. Although it should be the same hand, Shin felt somewhat different.

"If there is anything you want, let me know, and the guild will try to cooperate to a certain extent."

"Is this okay? To favor an individual?"

"No problem. It is a cooperation, so even a rank G adventurer is still a member of the guild."

Be it one individual or a guild, Barlux didn't seem to have any trouble lending power personally.

Returning into the room with the transition point, Celica who waited, welcomed the two of them by giving them potions.

Shin tried to refuse at first because he was unhurt, but decided to get it as Barlux insisted he take it.

“I hope for your success as an adventurer. Well then, see you again.”

After separating from Barlux, Shin walked to the passage to return to the guild hall with Celica.

“How was the match with Barlux-sama?”

“It was tough. I pray that there will be no second match.”

Because they were walking silently, Celica brought up the match with Barlux as the topic. He was a little anxious because the match ended quicker than the desired time.

“Because it’s not that often that one is able to fight with a guild master, it should be okay.”

“I have a feeling that I will be invited the next time as a practice partner…”

Shin sighed, as he promised not to repeat the situation where he would fight with a guild master in the future. While walking with Celica, a warrior with a level about 200 passed by them.

High level adventurers often wore an intimidating atmosphere, different from a commoner’s. Even for Celica, who, because of her job, had met a lot of them, she still unconsciously would get tense. However, no such presence could be felt from Shin. Rather, Celica felt something like a sense of security.

(A mysterious person…)

Celica was thinking about such things as the two of them arrived at the hall.

“Thank you for your hard work. Please take your time, since you can get the guild card anytime after tomorrow.”

“I will do that. Ah, could you recommend me to a good inn? I just arrived

today, so I don't know the area well."

Shin asked while lowering his head a little. He felt ashamed because he couldn't differentiate between the good or bad inns in the area. But he didn't want to stay in the poor quality inns from day one.

"There is a good inn in the residence district named Bear Point Pavilion. I think you will like it, because the meals are delicious. With the guild on your right hand side, go straight down the street, until you see a signboard with a bear's paw painted on it."

"I understand. Bear Point Pavilion it is.. Thank you very much."

Though Shin had a slight uneasiness about the word 'Bear', he believed that it would be all right, because Celica recommended it to him.

After expressing his gratitude to Celica, he exited the guild's building.

Then, Shin began to walk leisurely towards the inn.

Chapter 3

THE NEW GATE

Shin walked for 25 minutes after leaving the guild.

Before his eyes, there was a signboard with a bear's paw painted on it. According to Celica, this should be Bear Point Pavilion.

"There's no doubt about it, it's here."

He confirmed it again and placed his hand on the door. Laughter could be heard which became louder as he slowly opened the door.

Inside the Bear Point Pavilion, there was a counter with seats and a large number of people sitting at seven tables. Five of the tables were filled with adventurers making loud noises while drinking beer.

As Shin surveyed the scene, a shadow appeared in front of him. Something seemed to block the light, and he felt a presence behind his back, so he turned around.

"Hmm?"

An arm which took pride in its thickness, around thrice that of Shin's, and an apron with embroidered flowers came into sight.

"Welcome, please come in! Is it just one person?"

Hearing the voice from above, Shin lifted his head and saw a person with a rock-like, stern, face smiling viciously.

"Deke..."

He burst out a strange word in reply. Although Shin's height was 180 cemels, the person in front of him was probably 230 cemels or more. It was a giant.

"What's wrong, sonny? Are you feeling sick?"

"I'm feeling well! Um, you are?"

The words of the man made him return to his senses. Although the man didn't answer the way he expected.

“Me? I am the popular boss and shopkeeper of Bear Point Pavilion. I’m Douma Bear.”

“…Boss…you say?”

Shin thought there would be a pretty poster girl in the inn.

“Yeah! People gathered for that popular guy, the popular boss! To some extent, popular boss――”

“That is a poster girl!”

“――nuu” (T/N: ‘看板親父’(kanbanoyaji) is a parody word to match ‘看板娘’(kanbanmusume) which means a poster girl, Shin made a pun out of it.)

Shin retorted after he noticed the pun.

“Umu. Nice rebuttal!”

And then for some reason, the self proclaimed popular boss gave him a thumbs-up.

“Did I enter the wrong shop?…”

“Don’t be shy, young man.”

“No, I’m not shy! I just happen to look like this!”

Somehow, it evolved into a comedy dialogue.

“Good!! Nii-chan!”

“Do it some more!!”

Shin sighed because of all the shouts from the drunken group. It was a conversation livened up by alcohol.

“Haa, another――”

“Hey! What are you doing?!!”

“——one?”

Just as Shin thought about searching for another inn, he heard a female voice resound from the bar.

The voice seemed to come from behind Douma. Shin couldn’t see her because of the gigantic body in front of him.

“Dad? Didn’t I always tell you not to say weird things? What if strange rumors spread?”

The voice said. Even though the voice was calm, it was clear that it was said while suppressing its anger.

“No, it’s this, a form of——”

“Shut up!”

“…Yes”

Even his excuses were rejected right away. Judging from the remarks earlier, it could be said that the voice might belong to Douma’s daughter. Somehow the position was reversed.

“I will take over from here. Dad, go to the kitchen and help Mom.”

“I…I understand.”

Douma went back into the kitchen, feeling disheartened. Somehow, Shin’s impression of him had diminished.

“I’m sorry for the sudden, weird things you saw. Are you here to eat? Or to stay overnight?”

Douma could no longer be seen, as such, Shin could finally see Douma’s daughter after she reprimanded her dad to the kitchen.

It was a girl with a short brown hair. She might have a business smile, but she was still attractive. The word cute suited her more than beautiful.

“Ah, I will be staying. Even so, just now, is it always like that?”

“Though I want you to forget that, yes, it happens sometimes. My dad is in a good mood when he is with adventurers but turns bitter when he is with merchants.

By the way, staying overnight is 2 J silver coins including breakfast and dinner. To enter the bathhouse, you have to request for it. The charges are 4 J copper coins. The breakfast will be provided until 9 bell rings. If that’s okay, you can register at the inn’s registry.”

“Okay.”

Shin was unsure if 2 J silver coin for the inn was expensive or cheap. Since he didn’t have any problem with it for now, he accepted the offer.

“I don’t know how long I will stay, will that be okay?”

“If so, do you want to pay everyday? Or you can pay for a certain number of days and extend it as needed. Just to be sure, you are an adventurer, am I right?”

“Ah, yes, I just registered today. I was recommended by Celica to go here.”

“Celica’s recommendation!? You should have said that sooner. Then, I will offer you 1 J silver coin and 90 J copper coin. For adventurers, I recommend paying in advance. It’s normal to leave the inn for a few days whenever there is a request. Be warned that all personal items inside the room will be disposed of if the bill isn’t paid.”

A long term request was not rare for an adventurer, so the room might be empty for several days. There was also the risk of dying during a dangerous request. If that happens, it would not be possible to pay everyday.

“Then do you want to pay in advance? Or is it fine for now?”

As she said so, Shin took out 1 J gold coin from his Item Box (he pretended it was from his chest pocket) and handed it to her.

“This will be enough for 50 days, what about the change?”

“Can you subtract the fee for using the bathhouse from it?”

“Understood. Then I will let you know when it becomes insufficient. For now, write your name in the inn register. It will cost another 2 J copper coins if you need to write a name on someone else’s behalf.”

“No, it’s alright…will this do?”

“…Yeah, okay. Shin-san, here’s the key, the room number is 201 and its on the second floor. Do you know where the box for valuable things are placed?”

“Box? No, never heard of it.”

When the registration was confirmed, a room key was handed to him.

However, Shin tilted his head as he never heard about the box she mentioned before.

“Then, if you don’t know, that would be a loss. Because an inn with boxes is proof of it being an excellent shop. In other words, the box is something like a safe wherein valuables are kept. The box can only be opened by the person who locked it or the innkeeper. Besides, the box is immune to magic, skills, and physical attacks. Even if the inn is completely destroyed, the contents inside the box will be safe as the box itself is a magic item. How is it? Isn’t that great! Because it’s not possible to find an inn like this in the neighborhood.”

While explaining about the box’s indestructibility, some advertising was added. At least it was certainly better than the surrounding shops. Without the parody going on earlier, it would have been perfect, thought Shin.

He went up to the second floor after he received the key. He didn’t have any luggage, but he wanted to check the room.

Room 201 was the first room on the second floor.

The room was about 10 tatami big. It was a simple room with a single bed and a chair with a desk. If the bed included drawers and so on, it would be enough to live comfortably alone. There was a box for leaving valuable things in the inner part of the room. Besides that, there was nothing

inappropriate in that room. (Editor's note: The size of 10 tatami is about 15 square meters or 164 square feet.)

There was a toilet in addition to the furniture. It was even had a flush toilet.

Shin was surprised by it.

It's not really surprising that there was a toilet. In Shin's case, the circumstances were slightly different.

To begin with, toilets didn't even exist in THE NEW GATE. Even though the game pursued reality, nobody among the producers wanted to do the excretion act in the game.

It would spoil the mood if one got attacked by a monster in the middle of the act.

Without realizing it, Shin hadn't seen a toilet for one year after the game turned into a death game. Especially, a flushing toilet.

It could be said that each room had a toilet and that it's natural due to the quality of Bear Point Pavilion. But Shin got a mixed feeling of surprise and nostalgia from it.

"Believe it or not, just seeing a toilet brings memories from the past..."

Shin was surprised and had an indescribable feeling that no one knew.

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After checking the room, Shin locked it with the key and proceeded to go downstairs for the purpose of eating and gathering information. He had not eaten since he had at the guild. Also, it would be a waste if he didn't go eat the meal, as dinner was included in the room charge.

On the first floor, the adventurers were still making noises. From【Analyze • X】, the average adventurer level was 120.

Subsequently, Shin recalled the level of the knights he saw in Tsuki no Hokora. Though he didn't see many details, the knights should be around

100 ~ 110. And he wondered about the relationship between adventurers and knights in this country.

Then he found a seat, ordered a dish, and he decided to listen to the surrounding clamors until the dish came. He used【Noise Cancellation】so only voices could be heard and【Listen】so that voices and sounds from a certain range could be clearly heard. Thanks to the skills, he could even hear the muttering of other parties on remote seats.

It was easy to listen when using it, the menu filtered both voices and sounds alike, so that he could choose what to listen to. Almost none of the conversations were meaningful to listen to.

However, the information to be obtained in this place shouldn't be taken lightly. Even in the game, unexpected information would become available in this place since there were a lot of conversations going on. Though he didn't know whether it would be useful in this world, Shin didn't even have a shred of the common sense of this world in the first place, so he would have to hear it even if it was trifle. And there was no loss for him anyway.

"Have you heard? Wilhelm seemed to have quarrelled with hordes of demons."

"I'm hungry～. It's a meal, a meal"

"Did you hear the rumor? A Skull Face appeared in the Northern Forest."

"Recently, Hillock Herb can be harvested nicely."

"This beer is delicious!"

"What should I order～?"

"Popular boss you said...?"

"Tsugumi-chan, bring the alcohol～, Douma, get hold of yourself ――――"

He waited for the dish while organizing the information he heard in his mind.

There was one man who flew through the air but no one reacted to it. Shin also looked at it as if it was a usual thing.

Because he heard some words to be worried about, he took note of them in his mind. The most noteworthy was Skull Face.

This was the undead-type monster, Skull Face. The word Pawn, Jack, Queen, and so on showed the class among the monsters. Because the level of the monster would be different depending on the class, an individual would encounter hardships or annihilation if they didn't make sure to confirm it.

"Sorry for the wait, here's the food you ordered."

Shin came back to his senses after hearing the voice. He seemed to concentrate too much on using different skills to assess the state of the area.

Douma's daughter was putting the dish on the table when he turned around.

"Are you, by chance, deep in thought?"

"Ah, just lost in thought. Um…"

"Oh, I haven't introduced myself. I'm Tsugumi Bear. If there is some business, because my father is often in the kitchen, let me know"

"I understand. I wonder if you already know, but my name is Shin. I'm more or less an adventurer."

"More or less?"

"I haven't gotten my guild card yet."

"I see. By the way, what were you thinking about just now? How to quickly raise your rank?"

Tsugumi asked with interest as she sat facing Shin on the table after the meal was served.

Are rookie adventurers rare, Shin wondered.

“I will raise my rank leisurely. Because I came to this country from a faraway village, I’m not really familiar with the practices here. I was referred here as I looked around.”

“I see. I don’t know much, but people from other countries said there’s not much difference.”

“Is that so? Well you should be careful not to trust them, probably.”

“Well, you sure are an unusual person. A rookie adventurer should want to become stronger and raise their rank quickly. Furthermore, low rank adventurers seem to be made fun of frequently.”

“I guess that’s true. Because I am such an oddball, I will give an appropriate response if I were being made fun of.”

Shin said with self-confidence and a wide grin on his face. Although he didn’t know much of the image of adventurers, he was confident in his numerous skills. This was his idea to act a bit like an adventurer.

“Huh, are you that confident with your skills?”

“As it suits the occasion. When it is dangerous, I will run away quickly. I don’t want to die.”

To begin with, Shin had no intention to caused a commotion, so it was expected that he say that.

“Rather than sitting here casually, don’t you have other tables to attend to, miss waitress?”

“I will be called if there is an order so it is all right. Look, my mom is here, too.”

He followed Tsugumi’s line of sight and he saw a woman who had the same hair color as Tsugumi, and was receiving orders at other tables.

From there, Shin was convinced that Tsugumi took after her mother. It made Shin think that Tsugumi would become a beautiful woman when she

grew up.

“Goofing around, aren’t you…”

“I’m not goofing around. I’m gathering information, I repeat, gathering information.”

“About a rookie adventurer?”

“It might not have a promising future. But I have the eyes for people based on the various adventurers I have seen.”

Tsugumi said with a confident expression while putting her hand on her chest.

“Oh, then what about me?”

“Hmm…I wonder, 85 points maybe.”

“…Should I be happy about that?”

Though it might be as high as it sounded, it would depend on the grading criteria standard.

“It’s a place where I can expect a little.”

“So strict. What caused the minus points?”

“First point, your lack of ambition. You can’t succeed if you don’t have the will, besides, you are overconfident in your abilities. Though my rules are learned on experience.

“Ambition, huh. Well, there are steps for that.”

Shin didn’t register to become an adventurer for fame originally, so he didn’t have the motivation to work hard. Somehow it didn’t meet Tsugumi’s ideals.

“You sure are an easygoing guy. Hmm, now that you mentioned it, it really suits you. Well then, I will return to work or I’m gonna get scolded soon. Good luck, but don’t overdo it.”

Tsugumi said as she winked before leaving to take orders. The number of customers seemed to have increased. Without having noticed it, all tables were already filled.

He quickly finished his meal as he was alone at one table and went back to his room. When the amount of people increased, trouble increased too. He decided to dutifully follow Tsugumi's advice about how rookie adventurers were being made fun of.

He had nothing to do even if he went back to his room. If he was asked about it, he would just say he was organizing his luggage. After that, he went to the the bathhouse. After sweating lightly and removing a portion of his equipment, it became easier to sleep.

He erected a barrier inside his room before going to bed since it was his routine during the game. Although he didn't receive surprise attacks very often because of the detection system, he still took precaution.

As for the bed, it was soft and fluffy, and it was really comfortable. He was thanking Celica in his mind while letting his body fall asleep.

In the middle of his sleep, he suddenly remembered something that he had forgotten.

That reminds him,

"Message…sent?…Have…"

He cursed in his mind because he had completely forgotten about the message.

He woke up and saw an unfamiliar ceiling.

He recalled yesterday's events, from the last fight, being transported to a different world, lifting Tiera's curse and the events at the guild.

Though he didn't wish to have that dream, he could not help but wish to be able to log out safely and wake up in a hospital or in some other place.

"Such convenience, it won't go as I want."

He muttered that and looked at his surroundings.

The room was still dark, so he knew it was before dawn.

There were signs of people starting to move on the first floor. Apparently the people of this world were considerably early risers.

“No abnormality in both barrier and detection system. The former me would have woken up first and checked his surroundings.”

He smiled wryly and wondered when the last time he slept without being cautious was.

When he opened the window, fresh air from the outside entered the room. While feeling chilly from the cold air, he looked down from the window and he could see the figures of people walking on the street. The pedestrian traffic was sparse, but he felt it was gradually livening up.

Since Bear Point Pavilion was bigger than the surrounding buildings, he could see the townscape outside very well. It was different from the game or program as he was captivated by the townscape.

Because he fell asleep early, there was no sleepiness and he felt refreshed. While looking outside, the sun, which began to rise slowly and the ramparts that covered the town, could be seen.

He watched the town as it was gradually getting enveloped in warm light.

After a while, the sun was up and the number of people on the street started to increase.

Shin also took out equipment such as a jacket and trousers from the Item Box, and changed into them. He went downstairs after locking the room.

On the first floor, there were people who come to eat breakfast like Shin, people who already had breakfast, people who leave and enter the store, and so on.

Based on their appearances, almost everyone here was an adventurer. It seemed that it was not unusual to start mobilizing at sunrise.

“Good morning. Did you have a good night’s sleep yesterday?”

It was Tsugumi who greeted him. She was carrying a tray with a dish.

“Good morning. I woke up perfectly fine today.”

“Then that’s good. Breakfast right? I will prepare it soon so please have a seat.”

“Oh, thank you.”

He took a seat at the table, different from yesterday since he wasn’t eager to gather information early this morning.

The breakfast served was a stew with brown bread. The brown bread was neither too hard nor too soft, like a French bread. The stew was full of colorful vegetables and meat, it was voluminous than it looked.

He looked around and saw everyone dipping the bread into the stew.

“Delicious!”

It seemed to be cooked well. The ingredients of the stew mixed in harmoniously and the taste firmly permeated in the mouth. When combined with the bread, it’s was still delicious.

The unexpected taste made him refill his plate twice. He reflected a little after having eaten too much.

“You sure eat a lot in the morning.”

“So was yesterday, the food here is delicious.”

“You don’t have to say such wonderful words. It’s just a little service for Shin. By the way, you should wait a little more before going to the guild to pick up the guild card.”

“Is there anything going on at this time?”

“It is crowded especially in the morning. When you are a low rank, you might get interrupted and forced to enter a party so you better be careful.”

“That’s sound dangerous. Doesn’t the guild staff stop it?”

“Though they will stop it if they saw it was done in the open, the adventurers who does it has a method to prevent it from leaking out.”

“I see, it’s a situation that I need to get informed about.”

He decided to delay his time while thinking that those who were doing that were definitely petty people. It was not a big deal but he himself didn’t want to get in trouble with them.

“Just don’t rely too much on the guild staff, when in case of emergency, it may not be reliable.”

“I agree.”

“Well, as long as you take your time then it’s good.”

Tsugumi said as she went to take order for a waiting customer at another table.

He was thankful for Tsugumi’s consideration. He decided to kill time for a moment while drinking fruit juice. Because he had some spare time, he continued gathering information like yesterday, this time he observed the equipment and tools of the adventurers.

He noticed that he was casually using rare tools this morning. Nevertheless, he recalled the reason he had forgotten the message before going to sleep. While he was changing clothes and opening the Item Box, it suddenly reminded him of the weapons and tools lined up in Tsuki no Hokora.

There were equipment used by beginners to a few high-grade ones. The equipment for an intermediate person could be counted with one hand. Shin knew an advanced equipment was also included so he was a little regretful. Because of that, he directed his attention to the equipment and forgot about the message.

Although he already saw a lot of adventurers last night, it was easier now since many adventurers were going in and out.

"....."

While drinking the fruit juice, he glanced at the other side of table.

It seemed that most of the weapons were made from iron and copper. The armors were mostly made from leather or metals like steel, only a few of them had enchantment done.

The quality of the equipment and tool might have also deteriorated since the game era. Shin couldn't help to think that the equipment was terrible, though it was bad for the adventurers in this world.

It was also his reason choosing the low rank equipment when changing clothes. At present, Shin was wearing 'Mud Lizard Jacket' and 'Demon Spider Thread of Trouser'. Both are using the material from monsters that could be hunted even at level 70. However, the performance for both equipment was 4 times higher than normal, because it was reinforced until the limit was reached.

On his waist hang a katana named 'Several Strokes'. Several Strokes was the initial weapon that could be obtained when changing job to samurai. Naturally, its performance was low. Most players would sell it or put it in a warehouse when the players level up or even if it was strengthened. Still, the katana had better performance than any of the nearby adventurers that one could easily guessed its quality.

The equipment that Barlux had might be considerably valuable, Shin thought.

Afterwards, 30 minutes already passed after killing some time and gathering information, Shin left the Bear Point Pavillion.

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While walking on the road to the guild, he observed the town's appearance. There was not much pedestrian traffic compared to yesterday.

Various stalls started to open at the edge of the road, crowding with people having breakfast and buying lunch. Also, there were a lot of stalls that seemed useful to adventurers – selling armor, magic items, and various tools.

It was an incredible scene as the sun was only been out for two hours.

After window-shopping at the stalls, he walked to the guild. Since a lot of adventurers had weapons, Shin's weapon didn't attract attention.

Still,【Search】was used to search enemy as a habit and for caution. Shin probably didn't stop using the skill because there was the matter of the letter of introduction, too.

After walking for 40 minutes, he finally saw the signboard of the adventurer guild. Time taken to reach the guild was increased from yesterday probably because he was avoiding the crowded areas.

As he entered the building, a group of adventurers came out from the door. Though a lot of time passed, he sensed that there were still many people inside.

Celica and an elf lady were at the receptionist desk. He was certain because he could see a pointed ear like Tiera's. Shin approached the receptionist desk and talked to Celica.

"Good morning. I'm here to get my guild card."

"Good morning, Shin-sama. Please wait a moment while I go to get your guild card. And, this is Els whom you were looking for. Els, this is Shin-sama whom we talked about just now."

When Celica introduced him, the elf lady which sat in next to receptionist desk came toward Shin.

"Good morning, Shin-sama. My name is Els Balter. I'm told that Shin-sama has a business with me."

Els possessed a classic example of elven beauty, and her appearance looked like she was around 24 years of age. Her vivid green hair reached her waist like the trees in the forest. Blue eyes as reminiscent of lakeside. Her height was about 170 cemels. A style and good looks which would put models to shame. Though he had no idea about the preferences of adventurers in this world.

Since he couldn't stare for too long, Shin immediately averted his eyes.

“This, it’s probably addressed to you.”

Shin said and passed the letter of introduction from Tsuki no Hokora to her after he took it out from Item Box. The anti-theft measure had been removed.

“Addressed…to me…?”

While cocking her head and looking puzzled, she looked over its contents.

Then, her eyes widened momentarily as she read the letter of introduction. It could be said that she had read some unbelievable things in the letter.

“It can’t be…no, but”

Celica looked a little worried over her colleague’s state. And Shin was also anxious about the content because he didn’t know what was written. Though the content must be related to Tiera’s curse, it didn’t concern Shin that much as Tiera seemed to be secretive about it.

Els was very surprised that she mumbled and whispered something, like she had forgotten Shin and Celica was there. Then she returned to her senses and turned her attention to Shin.

“Umm…what?”

Shin flinched at her gaze. His heart was getting restless as he thought of the reason why she was staring at him.

“You…Tiera…thank you. I’m truly grateful.”

As soon as she said that, Els gave a quick bow. For some reason her speech became somewhat different.

“I’m sorry, but I don’t understand the situation…”

It was too abrupt and incomprehensible for Shin.

“I’m sorry, I seem to be a bit shaken. Celica, please take over for me just for a while. I apologize but this conversation will be confidential from now

on. Because we will continue at the back room, that I'm asking you to take over."

"I understand. I will call another staff to handle the reception for you."

"Thank you…"

Shin didn't have any problem with Els's proposal so he agreed while slightly feeling discouraged.

Shin enter the same room as yesterday. After both of them entered the room, Els closed the door and locked it with a room key and then she sat on the sofa after she had done a ritual.

"Once again let me say thank you. For lifting the Tiera's curse, thank you very much."

"Oh, so that was the reason."

Apparently, Els seemed to have known about the curse of Tiera. It seemed to be written in the letter of introduction.

"Please raise your head, I never intend for it to go out of hand like this."

"But, I was looking for a solution and still haven't found a clue. And you did it. So it's only natural to be grateful."

There was an item that could remove the curse but it seemed to be that it was hard to obtain. Perhaps she was going to an adventure to find the solution for the curse.

"If possible, please do not exaggerate it too much. Do you normally talk like that?"

"I understand. I will not leak this information in the name of Spirit of the woods. To be honest, not much of subject can be discussed openly. Also I find it most comfortable talking like this. It was written here that the person would not mind it, did that offend you?"

"No, it is good as it is. Was that the only reason why I was brought to this room? Just now what ritual were you doing?"

“That was an eavesdrop prevention magic. Even the guild staff cannot hear my story that I’m going to tell you now. And I have to ask you personally as well.”

Although Shin understand Els had various question from her state, he didn’t want to abuse his advantage as well.

“I’ll say this just in case, I don’t have the answer for everything.”

“I know. However, I could not stand it when I had looked for the solution for the curse for more than 50 years and had not found a single clue.”

It seemed that it was out of curiosity. Not only that, envy and earnest desire feeling seemed to mix in Els’s eyes.

50 years. The time spent was twice more than the time Shin was alive. Even if it was solved, one would indeed want to know the method used.

Besides, there might be another person who would get the curse.

“It wasn’t written in the letter of introduction?”

“It seemed to be written in haste so it wasn’t included. Well, how about this. I will do anything for you as a reward. Will you tell me, please?”

Els leaned forward as she step closer to Shin. Although Shin didn’t feel bad about being approached by a beauty, somehow there was a bloodthirsty aura emitting from her.

Shin didn’t want to hastily open the topic about【Purification】since he at least not yet have the basic common sense of this world.

However, Els knew about Tiera’s curse, and Tiera wrote it in introduction letter to inform Els. Shin thought it would not be a problem if he told her.

“I understand so please sit down. Before I tell you properly, please calm down for a bit.”

Els sat down again on the sofa while Shin adjusted his sitting posture.

“The method to remove the curse is using the skill,【Purification】. There

are other methods, but this is the most reliable method I know."

Though he knew that there was an item that could remove the curse, he didn't say it as he still couldn't confirm if it existed here.

"【Purification】?...for that skill to have such an effect."

He could understand the look of frustration on Els.

Because based from Tiera's story, only high rank priests could acquired the【Purification】skill.

"【Purification】acquisition...no, inherited in this case, how many people have inherited it"

"I don't know. In the church, only a person with position knows the condition to use【Purification】on a body. Moreover, not all of its effects are known. In the first place, it is unheard of a person who is not from the church that can use【Purification】."

"What...really?!"

Shin dropped his shoulder as he heard that from Els. He could imagine that it would be quite bad if the church knew he had that skill. That skill, if he were to stand out, it would attract a lot of enemy who would want to inherit that skill.

(I have a bad premonition about this...)

"Please don't tell it to anyone."

"Of course. Because I am a skill holder too, the guild is compelled to help me, or I will leave the guild. Therefore, I want you to feel relieved."

Els said like it was nothing. Shin thought it would be difficult to against humans or organizations but it seemed like he didn't have to worry.

"Well, as long as I am careful, it will be okay."

"Even so, it's a weight off my shoulders thanks to you. Although it was safe, living in that house for years is cruel."

“I thought so. It was the same reason why I dispelled the curse. Which reminds me, how did you know about the curse? Tiera was even quite hesitant to talk about it.”

“Me and Tiera are from the same village. I became an adventurer and went around the world, it was when I’m on my way back home that I knew about that incident. She was an ordinary elf at that time. She was a girl with beautiful silvery hair.”

“I see.”

“When I came back to the village after hearing that Tiera was cursed, she was already banished. To be honest, I never thought she would still alive after hearing about the curse until I met Schnee.”

A curse that attracted strong monsters, it was almost impossible to survive all alone. In fact, if Schnee didn’t protect her, the survival rate would have dropped to zero.

“She got the curse, and was helped by Schnee…, wasn’t it? Is she lucky or what?”

“It is for Tiera to decide. However, the curse was removed, thanks to you, and I think she can find happiness from now on.”

“You are right. It not for us to be the judge. So the story ends here. Is there anything else you want to ask?”

“None, what I wanted to ask, you had already answered. I’m sorry if it had taken your precious time.”

“It’s okay. Els’ feelings, I can understand it a bit.”

He wasn’t too conscious of the time as 30 minutes had elapsed while he was listening quietly to Els’ story.

When they left the reception room and returned to the receptionist desk, Celica and another miss receptionist was talking. The receptionist rose when she noticed Els and went up to the second floor after making a quick bow.

“Are you done?”

“Yes, we have finished our conversation.”

“I’m sorry, Celica. And thank you for this favor.”

After saying her thanks, Els started to attend to the request brought by adventurers at the receptionist desk.

“Then, Shin-sama, this is your guild card. Please be careful not to lose it, because it also serves as a proof of your rank. And a fee of 10 J silver coins is needed to reissue the card in case it gets lost.”

“I understand.”

Shin accepted the guild card from Celica. The card had his name, rank, affiliation, party described on it. He recalled Cilica’s explanation that the description couldn’t be seen unless a specific tool was used.

“Do you want to take on a request now?”

A bulletin board with requests posted on it was seen. As for rank G requests, something like collecting stuff and other miscellaneous duties were often found. They were less dangerous and therefore less rewarding. Still, the average reward was 1 J silver coin, which seemed to be highly paid.

“How about this? Can I take this request?”

He tore off a request posted on the bulletin board and took it to the receptionist desk. Shin intended to raise his rank by at least one. Still, Celica didn’t say anything about how he had the lowest rank even if she had the information of his rank.

“This request please.”

“This is to collect Hillock Herbs. Because this request is always given, there is no time limit. The reward will be 1 J silver coin per 30 pieces.”

“If I gather 60 of them, will I get 2 J silver coins?”

“Yes, There is always a demand for Hillock Herb, because it’s an ingredient in a potion. Are you okay with this request?”

“Yes, please. Oh, is there a picture book that shows the Hillock Herb?”

“Yes, there is. Please wait a moment.”

Actually, he already saw it in the game, but he decided to confirm its appearance to make sure. The book that Celica brought over from the bookshelf behind the reception was as thick as a dictionary.

She placed the book on the reception desk and exhaled in a small voice.

“Phew, this is a plant encyclopedia. And Hillock Herb…here it is.”

He confirmed the Hillock Herb while thanking Celica who took the trouble of opening the book and find it for him. The plant’s appearance didn’t seem to have changed. Its height was about 10 – 15 cemels with jagged leaves. He was hoping that it wouldn’t be difficult to gather 30 grown plants.

“It grows in the eastern and the northern forest.”

According to the book, Hillock Herb grew in the eastern and the northern forest, especially in the depths of the forest.

“Please be careful as people have been lost in the depth of the forest while searching for Hillock Herbs. You might also get attacked by ferocious monsters if you advance too far.”

“I’ll be careful.”

There were some things better left unsaid. When he went to ‘Tsuki no Hokora’, he had already crossed the eastern forest. The ferocious monsters that he had slaughtered were used to pay for his stay at the inn.

“Take care.”

Said Celica as Shin departed from the guild.

Shin walked toward the east gate, while wondering whether or not he should buy a map .

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——In the guild's lounge room.

Els and Celica had just finished tidying up some documents and were talking about Shin while drinking tea.

"Celica, do you know who that person is, just now?"

"Come to think of it, I don't know much about him yet. Although one might say I know him, I don't have much information about him either."

Shin had only arrived at the guild yesterday, so Celica didn't know much about him yet. Since he held the letter of introduction, she told Els about his match with Barlux.

"Are you saying the 'Blue Wolf' was dealt with easily? Though, even I can understand that he is a considerably strong person."

Because Celica was her colleague, she talked with her in a comfortable tone. She was originally like that, so it was not a problem for Els to communicate with in her this way. But she had to make sure not to talk like that in public, only when the two of them were alone.

By the way, 'Blue Wolf' seemed to refer to Barlux.

There was not much known about that person——Shin.

As Celica introduced Shin to her, Els said something related to her 'Official Title'.

"Indeed, no wonder I couldn't see it."

Els nodded as she understood the story from Celica.

"Is it true, that it wasn't seen?"

Celica looked at Els in disbelief.

Els was one of the executives with power next to the sub-master within the guild. Els was a skill【Analyze • Ⅶ】holder, and at the same time, she

held the title ‘Observer’. Therefore, she could even see through the name and level of people whose levels were higher than hers. A fake name could be seen through immediately by her. In fact, Barlux’s level was seen through at the first glance.

When Els said she couldn’t see through Shin, one would wonder who on earth he was.

She didn’t even know if his name, Shin, was true.

“Well, there is no need to worry about it too much. I don’t think Tiera would have handed a letter of introduction to a bad person.”

“Blue Wolf also had the same opinion. Just a little different.”

Celica muttered while remembering the mysterious sense of security she felt from Shin.

“Different…is he? Certainly, his ability and the atmosphere around him don’t match, it’s actually odd…”

“Indeed. How do I say this? It felt somewhat like a sense of security.”

Both of them stopped talking, with a good mood around them.

“I don’t know (I guess)…”

The more they thought about Shin, the more his image became blurred.

In the past, even when they felt uneasy, there was never a time when both of their hearts got riled up.

After he left the guild, Shin went toward the east gate without stopping. At first, he went along the main road, then he changed his path and entered the woods. The eastern forest was a place where rookie adventurers entered routinely. It looked like a place where almost none of the ferocious monsters came forth.

When he happened to pass through the gate, Beid informed him about this. He said that several rookies went to the eastern forest today. Beid was a guard at the south gate yesterday, but apparently the guard would rotate

after a certain period of time. He seemed to be guarding the east gate now for a while.

Easy quests could be done in 30 minutes in the game. He planned to finish this quickly, and then go to a library afterwards. Shin hastened his pace.

Even if the place was said to be fine for rookies to enter, the forest was dark and filled with trees. Beid said that there were only low-level demons or wild beasts, but it was still frightening for Shin as he was not yet accustomed to it.

Without putting too much trust in the information, he looked for the Hillock Herb cautiously.

If Shin's memory was correct, it should grow in places the sunlight easily gets to.

Since he heard that the Hillock Herb could be harvested easily, he thought that he could finish quickly.

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"...This isn't it."

He had entered the forest 3 hours ago.

"...This isn't it either!"

Number of harvests... zero.

"...Noooo!!"

Not a single Hillock Herb was found yet.

It had been a while since he entered the forest triumphantly. Despite walking with the reliance of his memory, he wasn't able to find even one herb.

"It's strange...No matter how much I look for it, not even one can be found."

It was strange because he had been slowly going deeper into the forest to find some. There were no signs of adventurers around so it was not likely that someone picked them all before him.

“Should I go a little deeper?”

The information from the encyclopedia stated that it was easier to find them deeper in the forest. Naturally, the surroundings became darker and the signs of wild animals could be felt everywhere.

He devoted himself to search for the plant without any encounters with monsters. As he advanced a little more, he went towards places monsters didn’t go to, and looked at the surroundings.

Even with a full search, he couldn’t find an open place where the sunlight hit the ground. Though he searched for likely places one after another, there were no signs of them, instead there were bushes and tree roots everywhere.

“I’m feeling hungry…”

The sun was already high in the sky, so it was about afternoon. He had walked forever and his stomach was growling because he hadn’t eaten lunch.

“Should I eat some food?”

Because his hunger was near the limit, and as a change of mood, he decided to have lunch.

He put his lunch from the ‘Item Box’ on a stump and began to eat. On the menu was hot dog and cola. The food items stored in the ‘Item Box’ do not rot as time progresses. He entered the forest without buying food beforehand, because he could store food items in his ‘Item Box’.

Though the food originally had special effects such as stats rise or HP recovery and so forth, somehow those areas were unavailable, so the effect couldn’t be felt.

In addition, there were various other luxurious food items but they seemed to be treated as normal food. Even if it had special effect, there

might be no time to eat the food while fighting a monster.

"Mmm, myum, fuu… Well then, shall I search for it?"

Without wasting any time, he finished his lunch. A characteristic of junk food was being able to eat it fast. He ate it quickly because he could be in trouble if a wild animal and a monster came, tempted by the smell.

Though he went to search for the Hillock Herb again, it still could not be found.

Another 3 hours later, after he ate lunch, it was rather refreshing; he had still found nothing. The Hillock Herb might just have been picked exhaustively, thought Shin.

After one more hour, Shin decided to return to the inn because he was tired. Though it was possible to go on physically, he felt mental fatigue after not being able to find what he was looking for.

When he arrived at the gate, the guards had been changed. It seemed that the guards took turns and patrolled in a rotational fashion.

He found Beid among the soldiers who returned from patrol and exchanged a few words while he confirmed Shin's guild card.

"Yo, you look tired. Did you find what you were looking for?"

"The thing is, I went to the eastern forest to gather Hillock Herb, but I have searched for it all day long and haven't found one…"

"Oioi, that herb can be found easily if you look for it properly. I saw several rookies return with it today. It was harvested well."

"WH…WHAT…?"

Other rookies were harvesting well. Shin was shocked as he was struck by the words.

"I think everyone returned in the morning…You, surely you weren't searching for it for a full day, right?"

"...Yes..."

He covered his face with his palms and dropped his shoulders. Shin was an SS rank adventurer during the time of the game. His pride was shattered here even if he knew this was a different world.

"Well, that, what can I say. Cheer up."

"Ku, your encouraging words sting my eyes."

Since Beid too didn't know Hillock Herbs couldn't be found there, without knowing, only mundane words came out.

"Well, this is just your luck, I guess. I don't think today is your day, but you can try again tomorrow."

"It is so...should I go deeper into the forest tomorrow?"

"Don't go too far into the forest. Though you won't do such blunder, a lot of rookies die easily because they advance too far into the depths."

"I understand. See you."

He understood Beid's worry, too. And there was no need to hurry as there was no time limit. Yet, there was this psychology of person who wanted to find something when it was not found before. When it came to this, Shin had begun to make a plan regarding his trip to the northern forest tomorrow.

◆◆◆◆

The next day.

Shin awoke at dawn and immediately started to mobilize.

He checked his equipment, had breakfast in the Bear Point Pavilion and pushed his way through the crowded area. On the way, he stopped by at a secondhand shop and purchased a simple map that showed the area around the kingdom. Yesterday he thought he was going to return quickly, so he didn't buy one. Even though it was a map depicting the kingdom and the surrounding area, it was only a rough sketch. Because he didn't want to

explore the kingdom yet, he decided to purchase it only if the map had a record of the northern forest.

After leaving the secondhand shop, Shin walked towards the gate. He saw a crowd there. “Is something going on over there?” Shin thought as he approached.

There was a barely identifiable vehicle which looked like a carriage. A coachman entered from the gate and several adventurers followed behind the carriage. Though the coachman seemed to be unhurt, the adventurers seemed to suffer from serious injuries. They helped each other as one of the less heavily injured adventurers lent his shoulder to one missing an arm. Anyone would agree that they had barely escaped with their lives based on their appearance.

“What happened?”

This kind of crowd loved to watch the strange group, but no one tried to be concerned. He only stared at the guards listening to the story from a distance.

(Their levels are 131, 129, 118, and 134.)

The knight leader was level 188. Assuming the ability of the knight leader was rank A, they would probably be rank C or D adventurers.

There were scratches on both the adventurers’ armor and on the carriage, one could guess it was done with sharp tools. But it would be too hasty to conclude they were attacked by thieves or robbers, because there was a huge cut on the roof of the carriage.

After a while, the curious spectators started to scatter, and the adventurers were left to be treated.

As Shin approached the gate, he talked to Beid.

“Hey Beid, what happened to that group just now?”

“Hmm? Oh Shin. They were attacked by a monster and escaped.”

It wasn’t an attack by thieves or robbers after all.

“I see. Did you ask what they were attacked by?”

“I was told not to speak carelessly. Well, I think it will be alright if it’s you. But anyway, it will be known soon.”

“Is he an important person?”

What kind of monster it was that caused the guard to be alerted, he would have to wait for Beid’s words to make sure.

“…It’s a Skull Face. You’ve heard the rumors too, right?”

“Ah, I certainly have…if I’m not mistaken, it appeared at the northern forest.”

“Yes, it has. Because there were hardly any eyewitness reports, it was thought to be a Pawn class, but, apparently, it was a Jack class. “

“Jack class…How many people were in that party?”

“Two parties with full members, 12 people in total. As you can see, only four survived.”

“I see…”

The level of a Jack • Skull Face was around 150 ~ 250. The average level of the adventurers’ party earlier was probably around 120. If 12 people couldn’t defeat it, despite the adventurers’ equipment, it was reasonable to think that the Jack • Skull Face was beyond level 200.

“All high-ranking adventurers are out now. Depending on the case, the guild master or the knight leader will come out.”

“If you think about the level, it’s an adequate move. Hmm? Will the princess go out as well? She is pretty strong.”

He recalled that the second princess exceeded level 200 and asked Beid.

“I hope not…No matter how strong she is, this is royal family you’re talking about.”

“No, when I heard about the princess, I thought of someone who is crazy about fighting. Even the Horn Dragon will be defeated by her.”

“Ah…that…”

In contrast to yesterday, it was now Beid’s turn to do a facepalm and drop his shoulders. Apparently, it was a topic that should not be touched.

“For now, just avoid approaching the northern forest, right?”

“I expect you to understand but be careful.”

He hurriedly left toward the eastern forest. A worker of the kingdom also had hard times.

He crossed the range of his search in the eastern forest yesterday, and proceeded to the depth of the forest at once. Even though he knew monsters were wandering around from【Search】, he didn’t worry about it as the monsters could be easily defeated by him.

He strolled into the depths of the forest looking for Hillock Herb. According to the information from the encyclopedia, it should be easier to find in the depths of the forest. And he already discovered several pieces of them growing. The current number in possession was 13 pieces. Still, he hadn’t reached half the goal yet.

After strolling for about two hours and still couldn’t find more than 13 pieces, he decided to go to the northern forest. It could be said that the eastern forest and the northern forest were connected with one main road. So he entered the northern forest and went straight to the depth via the route to the west.

He saw a road after walking for a while. Two carriages could pass by another, as that was the width of the road.

The adventurers were probably attacked by the Skull Face around here, Shin guessed. The roof from the cutout was lying on the side of the road. And puddles of blood and pieces of armor were seen everywhere. No corpses were found as the wild animals and monsters already disposed of them.

“In this world, is a Skull Face a powerful enemy?…”

He muttered while looking at the remains of the carriage. It would no longer be a habitable place for humans if a Jack class Skull Face was that strong, Shin thought.

“It’s no use to think about it now.”

He discarded the thought he had in his mind and entered the northern forest.

As for the northern forest, the trees grow denser together here than in the eastern forest. The sunlight was decreased by more than half, so it was fairly dark despite it being daytime. Just going straight required Shin to be cautious. As Shin walked deeper, he sighed seeing how he would have a hard time looking for the Hillock Herb. Unlike the eastern forest, a lot of monsters lived in the northern forest.

The map had a function that displayed a red or yellow marker. When he combined the search operation skill with the map, Shin could know how many monsters were hiding in a certain radius around him.

He didn’t want to kill unnecessarily, but he would counter-attack if monsters attacked him. He wondered how long he would last while fighting with【Limit】.

Unlike the situation when he fought against Barlux, he, without taking any consideration, dealt a single blow to a monster and sent it flying. Although he wasn’t surprised because it also happened when he went to ‘Tsuki no Hokora’, he didn’t know the extent that his maximum offensive power had risen to. He only understood his stats from before he got transported here, but not since his stats had doubled.

He had no choice but to use a support skill,【Limit】at maximum level Ⅹ.

【Limit】was a skill that was made so that a beginner and a high level player could play together. If the skill level was raised by one(from level 2 to level 3), the skill would limit the stats to 1/3 of their original value, instead of only halving it. As a result, the players could still play together despite the difference in level and stats.

Even though there was a method to check the changes of physical strength according to the stat rises, he couldn't take action as it could destroy the surrounding area. Incidentally, the limitation was also executed as a danger-preventative measure for the accomplishment of the request.

Currently, the maximum stats value for Shin's STR was 223, which was 1/10 of his original STR, because of【Limit】. The others stats value were still intact. This was the STR stats value of a human without any reincarnation at level 255.

By the way,【Limit • Ⅰ】didn't restrict the stats as it was 1/1 from original stats. The lowest level of this skill provides no change, while the highest level restricts a stat to 1/10 of it's original value.

Why only STR? It's because he was experimenting on how much damage a monster could deal to an ordinary human. It was also to avoid suspicion from other members if he joined a party.

...To prevent himself from carelessly changing the surrounding terrain by using an all out attack, was also one of the implications.

Since there were numerous monsters, he only fought them while searching for Hillock Herb because it was useless to hunt all of the monsters. While thinking that, he wished he had the skill to search for an item.

As he went further into the depth of the forest, he was able to find more Hillock Herbs.

Currently, the number in possession was 29 pieces. Only one more was needed to complete the request. Alright, just one more! Shin was getting fired up as he walked carefully in the forest. At that time, he detected a marker which made a strange move on the map that progressed to the edge of the map view.

The color was red. And that was the color that indicated a hostile existence.

But, the red marker didn't move much from the place, instead it was moving in zig-zag line in a range of 10 mels.

“What is this?”

He was drawn to the current movement of the marker which had awakened his curiosity. He started to advance towards the direction of the marker with the help of the map, so that he could take a look at the situation.

The movement of the marker stopped for a few minutes while Shin moved closer. Then he waited and looked from the shadow of a tree.

Shin stood still as he was at a loss for words when he saw the figure.

Before his eyes, there was a figure of Jack • Skull Face. While its big body was only bones, it was twice as big as the Pawn class, its height was about 3 mels or more. It was fully equipped from gauntlet to armor and wore a helmet on its head. In addition, it had a round shield with diameter of 1 mel equipped in its left hand, and held a 2 mels long greatsword in its right.

The equipment it was wearing was all in one color, solid black, except for the greatsword. It couldn’t be compared to the Pawn class which was equipped with a rusted sword and worn-out gauntlets.

A dim purple flame could be seen in each of its bony eye sockets, and its whole body emitted a black smoke which could be called a negative aura.

It had the presence of an undead military commander who had returned from hell. It was a Skull Face of the Jack class.

The dwellers of this world would be frozen in fear if they looked at this existence.

However, that was not the reason why Shin stood still and was at loss for words. To begin with, a Jack • Skull Face was just small fry for Shin. Then why did he look at the enemy without starting to attack?

It was because,

“Why is the Skull Face breakdancing?”

Shin’s words spoke for themselves.

Undead monsters held grudges towards all living things, they were existences that would drag any living things to the dead side. Its appearance made any person who saw it feel fear, its body didn't feel fatigue so as to lavish death upon its surroundings. There existed a group of undead monsters in THE NEW GATE, and the Skull Face was said to be its representative.

It was never an existence that was meant to breakdance in the depth of the forest.

"It's surreal...too surreal. Do you like to dance that much? You?"

Around the Skull Face, there were no trees, and if seen from above a big hole opened in the forest. Which was not surprising, as the Skull Face wore armor and the breakdance was done while equipped with both sword and shield. Hence, the grass was mown down by the shield, the big trees were cut down by the greatsword, and the ground was scooped out by the ruggedness of the armor.

In the first place, there was the question of whether it was possible to breakdance while wearing armor, but that question was dismissed as the Skull Face had done it.

Shin revealed a trace of pity on his face.

Somehow he even felt indescribably guilty for having looked at something that he shouldn't have.

However, such thoughts of Shin's dissipated instantly after the Skull Face revealed its true color.

The sound of liquid splashing reached Shin's ears. As he shifted his attention to a big tree there, the trunk of the large tree was stained with red《･･･》liquid.

Shin immediately observed the appearance of the Skull Face. The greatsword that resounded while cutting through the air, the armor that covered its skeleton body, the shield that mowed down the grass, all of them were stained in the same colored liquid as the tree-trunks.

As he shifted his line of sight a bit, there were corpses of monsters that

were sliced in half lying around. The Skull Face was his opponent after all, no more discussion needed.

The Skull Face that appeared in the northern forest. Attacked adventurers. Dry blood that stuck to the greatsword and blood that was still dripping. There was no need for a conviction. Even so, Shin was not so optimistic as to think that the Skull Face wasn't attacking the adventurers, so letting it roam free wasn't possible.

He regained control of his thought process. His blurred face tightened, and the atmosphere changed from slacked to sharp.

"I don't want to be fooled in this situation."

He muttered while not neglecting the task of gathering information on the opponent. It was dangerous to think that the world remained unchanged since the game ended.

In fact, 30 cemels wide big trees were slashed – that didn't seem like a joke. There was no point in lowering his guard either.

"Should I start?"

Shin unsheathed his katana and waited for the right timing. And the moment the Skull Face's back was facing Shin, he took his stance and decreased the distance between them in a split second.

He drew his katana as the distance between them shrank, and targeted a brandish skill at the Skull Face's defenseless back.

Moderate damage could be dealt by surprise attacks from behind, though Skull Faces generally had a tolerance for slashing attacks.

However, his expectations failed him.

The moment Shin's katana swung toward the back of the Skull Face, as if it sensed the danger, the Skull Face flung its left arm against the ground and accelerated its rotation with the force of the recoil. Then the Skull Face began to counter-attack with its greatsword.

"What is this!?"

Shin ran past the Skull Face without losing momentum, and escaped from the range of the counter-attack.

It was no wonder that Shin was astounded. A level 250 Skull Face wouldn't do a strange movement like the one just now. The flowing defense and the counter-attack with its sword. Moreover, it didn't break its pose even after that. It was a movement that was not possible during in the game.

But the Skull Face's appearance was that of a skeleton to begin with, so it's movements weren't restricted by joint or muscle.

Shin couldn't hide his surprise at the unimaginable fighting power of the Skull Face.

"What is that movement? Those are not the movements of a Skull Face."

The breakdance in itself was weird, but now he couldn't make any sense of it.

"Even its level is strange. Besides, that sword is not supposed to be with a Skull Face."

He looked at the Skull Face while fixing his posture. According to【Analyze • X】, the Skull Face's level was 359. Let alone Jack class, it jumped over Queen straight to King class.

In addition, the sword that it held was the problem. Humans wouldn't be able to handle the greatsword if they weren't using both of their hands. Besides the dazzling ornaments on the hilt, the sword blade emitted a silver shine and a blue line traveled along its center. It was likely a demon steel that was harder than iron and was combined with mithril which had good compatibility with magic. A portion of the blade's edge shined with a strong, white light.

The white light revealed the sword's light attribute. It had the atmosphere that could be compared to a holy sword.It was not a weapon that an undead monster would hold no matter what, as it had the opposite attribute.

"I think it's reasonable to think of it as a unique monster."

He raised his alertness level by one stage. Unique monsters often had a different attribute and ability from the original. But even Shin hadn't heard of a monster that had the attribute of its own weak point.

The Skull Face now stood with both feet on the ground as it recognized Shin as a powerful enemy. Pulling its weapon and shield backwards slightly, it took on a stance. That was obviously the movement of a person who had mastered fencing, but there was a clear distinction as the Skull Face could only do repeated attacks.

"That dance didn't seem to be a joke either!!"

While muttering he again charged toward the Skull Face, this time directly to its left side which held the shield.

Again, he closed the distance instantly with the unsheathed katana and aimed at the opponent's left ankle.

"Seissh!!"

A flash was seen on the Skull Face's left ankle.

Even though the Skull Face also reacted to attack by defending with its shield, it couldn't prevent the calamity because of the differences in their physique and the size of its shield.

"Kin!" The sound of metal rubbing against metal resounded in the air, metal resounded, and Shin distanced himself from the greatsword. The Skull Face would begin attacking Shin with its greatsword while ignoring its own defense when it couldn't dodge.

The greatsword was swung down in the place toward Shin, and he dodged as he judged that it was too dangerous to take the blow head on. The ground was split about 3 mels by the slashing of the greatsword.

"I've never heard of that weapon before, is it rare or unique grade?"

The attack range of its weapon was increased with magic. From Shin's view, this was an ordinary attack, but the weapon of the monster originally didn't have this ability. Not to forget that the Skull Face could also make acrobatic moves.

As for the Skull Face, it didn't care about the dubious Shin and started its revenge with its greatsword. Its left ankle was cut in half from the blow before, however it wouldn't be a serious problem for it since it didn't feel any pain. As if there was no ankle from the start, it just thrust its left foot on the ground and let out a strong side sweep.

Shin ran toward the Skull Face and invoked a sword skill,【Dazzling Blade Sink】. The katana hit the blade of the greatsword near the hilt, as he eluded the side sweep.

Then he activated a martial art skill for fencing,【Crushed Blade】in a flash.

The skill was usually used to deal damage to opponents that have slashing attack tolerance. And the attack crushed the Skull Face's armor.

——Again, it was not as he expected.

“Seriously!?”

It was understandable that Shin was astonished.

The katana attack from Shin was successfully dodged by the Skull Face. Just as the blade was about to hit, the Skull Face did a back step and the katana missed its body. Though the attack broke the armor, it didn’t do much damage to its body.

It moved as if it knew that the katana attack was a powerful slash. Even if Shin didn’t take it seriously, it was already abnormal for it to follow his movement up until then.

“GeeEEEEaaaaAAAAAAAA－－－－－－!!!!”

The scream that resounded from the Skull Face could be misinterpreted as the crooked groan of a beast. It was the voice of resentment that would make any person feel discomfort when they heard it.

Even Shin frowned after being screamed at from close range. There was no special effect, but the loud sound would instigate fear on all living things.

He immediately resuscitated himself and jumped backwards. The HP gauge of the Skull Face only decreased a little, since the attack only hit the armor so the damage was only minimal. If the attack didn’t reach the core of the Skull Face, heavy damage could not be dealt.

“Man, why do I meet a strange monster this early?”

He muttered a half astonished and half praising sentence following the Skull Face’s movement.

As he look at his own katana, he noticed several cracks on its blade.

A durability value was set to weapons and armor. When it dropped to zero, it would make the weapons and armor unusable.

Currently, Several Stroke’s durability was already below 30%. Since Skull Face’s weapon was strong, it probably damaged the katana’s blade when they clashed.

“I can only do one more attack at most. Then, I will try this!”

Shin and Skull Face. The lone man and his surroundings, cruelly destroyed by the Skull Face. He changed his posture into a different one from earlier.

He put his left foot in front and bent slightly forward. He pulled his katana while lowering it to his waist.

And he muttered.

“【Limit • Off】”

The suppressed ability or stat was released from the skill’s effect.

Even ordinary people could sense the transformation in Shin.

The katana he held in his hand was channeled with energy and “Gishiri” sounds were made.

“GuUUuuuUUuUuUUU－－－－－－－－”

It seemed that Shin’s transformation caused the Skull Face to be vigilant. As it groans in deep tone, it hold the shield in front, and took a posture that emphasized defense.

Shin admired the Skull Face’s movement while he was charging energy into his katana.

“Shhh!!”

While exhaling short breaths and concentrating energy in his katana, he brandished it.

He left an afterimage as he rushed into the Skull Face and struck a single blow.

Two sounds were heard, “Ki” and “Gin”. Then Shin’s figure vanished from in front of the Skull Face.

Two changes took place.

One, Shin's katana was shattered, left only its hilt.

Two, the greatsword of the Skull Face was blasted away and disappeared into the sky.

Among the two sounds echoing in the surroundings, the "Ki" sound was the blow of Shin hitting the shield. The clear "Kin" sound was made when he cut through the core of the Skull Face together with its armor. And the following "Gin" sound was produced as Shin's katana and the Skull Face's greatsword clashed together.

The greatsword was not broken as it durability value was very high, but Skull Face's hand couldn't withstand the impact, so the sword was thrown up into the sky.

The core was cut in half and Skull Face's HP gauge was drained entirely, and left were mere bones. It hard to associated the scattered bones with the intense combat just a few minute ago.

"I knew this weapon wouldn't last long."

He sighed while staring at Several Stroke's hilt. It was a powerful single blow, but it still wasn't his maximum power. Though the big trees behind the Skull Face fell down just now as an aftereffect of the attack, he placed the hilt inside the 'Item Box' like it was only natural.

"The greatsword from a little while ago seems good."

He looked up in the direction the sword flew, but all he saw was a clear, wide and blue sky and he didn't know where the sword flew to.

Though he didn't expect that the sword would be blown off too far, he could only pray that it didn't hit a person.

"...Should I return?"

Anyway, he wasn't in the mood to search for Hillock Herbs anymore after all that.

Because there were jewels among the bones, so he collected them before he left.

After Shin got out of the forest, he began to walk toward the gate and thought that he had better to report about the Skull Face case to the guild.

Without knowing that the greatsword caused a commotion in the kingdom,

Shin left the northern forest and had returned to the east gate.

He noticed that the gate area was noisy as he walked closer.

“Is there something going on?”

No curious spectators gathered like yesterday, it was just the guards who seemed to be asking for information from the passerby. Seemingly, only the people entering the country got questioned.

Although he could enter without waiting in line as adventurers have guild cards, he wanted to listen to the story one by one. So he lined up and waited for his turn to come.

When the distance to the gate gradually decreased, he could listen to the guards’ and adventurers’ voices.

“Northern forest…eastern forest…shadow, flew…?”

Only a fragment of the conversation could be heard, but he couldn’t expel the bad feelings from his mind.

As the distance diminished, he summarized the story he heard clearly together. The residents of the town witnessed a mysterious object flying in the sky. Furthermore, it seems to have fallen into the royal castle. The eyewitnesses saw it was flying, but couldn’t determine if it came from the northern or eastern forest and no one knew what circumstances behind it as the investigation proceed.

(Mysterious flying object…it is the sword after all…)

He remembered the greatsword that was blown away. But he didn’t know which way or in which direction it flew as he concentrated on the battle.

His feet were getting heavier the closer he got to the gate.

“Yo Shin.”

“Yo Beid, has something happened?”

He replied to Beid as if nothing had happened. He wanted to believe that the mysterious flying object was not the greatsword.

People called this an escapism.

“To tell you the truth, a sword has flown toward the royal castle. From the investigation we had, it was either from the north or from the east. Didn’t you go to eastern forest? Did you saw anything?”

“...No, I didn’t see it. Were there any injuries?”

From the story, no people were hurt, as the sword fell and stuck to the castle wall. Good grief, it was absurd that a sword flew over the rampart.”

“It’s a good thing that no one got hurt.”

He breathed a sigh of relief at the words of no human injury.

“Let’s confirm the direction firmly.”

He made a promise to himself at that moment.

“Huh? What?”

“No, It’s nothing. May I go now?”

“Ah, Please tell the soldier who does the investigation if you remember anything.”

“Roger that.”

He left the gate with a quick pace while maintaining his poker face. He walked until the gate was out of sight and loosened his pace as he let out a sigh.

“Haa, why did it land at the royal castle out of all places?”

Already on the third day in this different world, he had a hunch that the country was already determined to be his opponent. It was very likely that he was gonna be charged with treason for attacking the royal family. Frankly speaking, it was very bad.

Even though there was no evidence that lead to Shin, when he reported about the Skull Face to the guild, the doubt would be shifted toward him somehow.

“Why did it happen this way…”

It wouldn’t always go the way he wanted in life.

◆◆◆◆

Shin set aside his worry and headed toward the guild. Though the rumor about the Skull Face was true, they hadn’t heard about it. In addition, the Jack • Skull Face basically has several Pawn class subordinates, so he couldn’t assert that it became safe just because the Jack class was subjugated.

Shin had been searching for enemies in the surrounding area when he left the battle location, but there were no signs of other monsters in the surroundings. Did it act alone? Or were its subordinates swallowed up by the dance and sliced into pieces? It was very likely the latter if one looked at the Skull Face’s actions. It was not a movement that could distinguish between friend or foe.

Even a normal adventurer of this world could handle a Pawn class monster, so there was no problem if it was revealed to be Pawn class. But the story was different in case of a unique monster like the Jack class. From Beid’s way of speaking, he seemed not to worried, because a Jack class monster didn’t came forth very often.

Nevertheless, would it end with only a mere unique monster appearance this time? It was the anxiety of Shin, who was ignorant about this world.

That said, the current Shin didn’t understand it no matter how much he thought about it. He thought about whether he should ask Els or Celica

again about that situation and opened the guild door.

The guild was the most crowded place Shin had ever seen. The place where adventurers assemble, was crowded with adventurers who were armed with swords and spears, and wore armor and robes.

Besides the anxious feelings, the place generally had a feeling of excitement to it. There were some unusual people who didn't seem to be agitated.

"This is somewhat imposing."

Although there were many people, the receptionist desk was not crowded, so he decided to report it at once. Conveniently, Celica was at the receptionist desk. Shin was saved from trouble because the contents of his report were more or less better told to a person he knew.

"Hello. I have something I need to report."

"Thank you for your hard work, Shin-sama. The report?"

"It was about the Skull Face. However to be sure, how much is known by now?"

"Tsu!...the Skull Face is known to be Jack class, it's been reported from surviving adventurers that the Skull Face holds a weapon that is stronger than normal. Every individual confirmed it in general. The Pawn class subordinates are not confirmed yet. Currently, subjugation requests have been issued. It became top priority, because the place in question is near the kingdom. Various A and S ranks are all out because of the situation, and are getting ready to set up a front party with B ranks and below."

It seemed that its battle style was not known. But it was the information regarding the weapon that Shin was anxious about.

"The weapon is stronger than normal?"

"Rather than a common greatsword, the Skull Face's sword is around twice as big."

"...It's a greatsword, huh? Any other information about the sword?"

“No, that’s all we know for now.”

The information about the sword had already circulated after all. As expected, the adventurers who survived the battle did not forget the weapon of the enemy. However, the greatsword which that Jack class was using should have been charged with light magic of the light attribute. Why was there no information about that?

“…In summary, it is a Jack class with a larger than usual weapon, right?”

“Yes. The level is presumed to be at least 200 or more.”

“……”

Hmm, Shin pondered. That was not the answer Shin wanted to hear, he wanted to know whether or not the greatsword was charged with light magic. But from Celica’s story it seemed like the weapon of the Jack class was just a mere greatsword. Because he expected that a magic bestowed weapon would be rare, he was in danger of being suspected to have a connection with the sword that flew into the royal castle if he unskillfully mentioned it.

The idea of a totally different Skull Face appeared in Shin’s mind, but the idea of two Skull Faces would only make uproar if he mentioned it. Besides, was there such a thing like two Jack • Skull Face with similar greatswords appearing at the same time in the same place?

“Uhm, Shin-sama?”

“Ah, sorry. Just slightly lost in thought.”

Celica was slightly worried, because Shin had pondered while his facial expression showed a serious look. According to Celica’s judgment, Shin was one of the few people with fighting power equal to the S class. If such a person was making a serious face when hearing the information about the Skull Face, it couldn’t be helped that she became uneasy.

“What are you thinking about?…”

“Well, I was thinking about what kind of items Skull Faces drop.”

Shin thought about the greatsword, about whether or not it was charged with light magic and what kind of questions he should ask to find out, but could not say it. Instead, he decided to ask about the item drop.

“Item drops? Uhm, If I remember correctly, it drops a jewel, worn-out armor and a sword, which can be sold at moderate prices, I think…”

“Oh, is that so. Iyaa, I completely forgot about that, hahaha”

Shin behaved cheerily so that the lie he told wouldn’t be exposed, but by all odds, he behaved suspiciously.

However, Celica didn’t notice Shin’s strange behavior because a Skull Face of the Jack class was a formidable opponent, so she wasn’t worried about the item drop. In the guild, a senile looking man laughed unnaturally as he replied to a woman, which was an out of place scene.

“That reminds me, what kind of case would Shin-sama like to report?”

“Oops, sorry. It’s an important matter. I want to report that the Jack • Skull Face in the northern forest was killed by me. Ah, this is the jewel which I recovered at the time.”

“Really? Skull Face…Skull…that…?…uhm, was it Pawn class?…”

“No, it was a Jack class. It had a greatsword too.”

“……”

Celica’s movement became awkward as she tried to take out the document like usual after hearing Shin’s words. Somehow she managed to return a question about whether she misheard Shin’s words, but said question was denied plainly. It was so surprising that no words came out.

“……”

“……”

“…Errr, Celica-san?”

“Eh? Ah!? So-sorry! I was surprised for a moment.”

Celica pulled herself together and apologized in a hurry. That caused her tone to return to normal.

“Is it that surprising?”

“No, not at all!? At least an A rank with considerable ability is necessary to subjugate the Skull Face of Jack class alone. Please do not say it like it was a trivial thing!”

“Uhm, sorry?”

“I knew Shin-sama was a strong person…but subjugating it alone on the day the request is issued is unheard of.”

“That encounter was a coincidence though…”

“Still, normally a person would return first and report it to the guild, then attack after they firmly prepared. I think only few people would think of attacking it on the spot.”

“I see. No, but certainly my weapon is like this.”

The sword, which was mostly just a hilt, was shown. During the fight, when he heard the crack, the katana’s blade was already in a sorry state. In other words, its state was currently worse than a bamboo sword.

“Ha!? Has it shattered!”

“I only managed to keep this little part.”

“What kind of absurdity did you do!?”

“Wha!? Celica-san, too close! Too close!”

He held Celica’s shoulders to stop her from approaching any closer and climbing over the counter while her expression changed. Because of the sudden action, their faces approached each other until they were around 20 cemels apart.

Shin was experiencing a trivial, internal conflict about whether he should praise or scorn himself for reacting to Celica’s unexpected action.

“Eh…Ahh, I’m sorry, I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to do such a strange thing. I was worried that you got injured or rather I got too excited…Wait, what am I saying!?”

The shaken Celica was amusing to Shin as he watched her. Shin almost retorted as he looked at her. She appeared to be so surprised that the Jack class was defeated by him alone.

“An intellectual, cool woman who is both shy and nervous…? Somehow this is…someone is coming!”

It’s better for me to come, but don’t give off some half-baked calmness. You are kinda conspicuous.”

“Huh? Oh, Els”

Is this gap moe?…Shin nodded alone as Els called from behind him. Apparently, Shin and Celica’s conversation was attracting attention from the surrounding people without them knowing it.

“Excuse me for intruding. Besides, just now the embarrassed Celica-san was so cute.”

“Cu-cute!?”

“Though I agree there, I would like you not to bully your colleague too much.”

“Agree!?”

“I’m sorry. But it was not intentional, the explanation still remains.”

“I know. Because I also saw her.”

“If that’s the case, what about my opinion…”

Els and Shin who hastened their conversation, ignoring all of Celica’s words. If Els was there from the beginning, Shin felt that the situation would not become like this.

“Don’t say that. I have even prepared in various ways and was gathering

information."

Els' attire was not the miss receptionist look like what Celica was wearing. Instead she was wearing hunter-equipment that was made for easiness of movement. She wore a slightly long leather jacket which seemed to be made from a durable material, together with a pouch to store small items and compression shorts that went to her knees, which were covered by long boots. The bow on her back was the fundamental equipment of a hunter, while a dagger was tied to her left thigh. Her long hair was tied up and the atmosphere around her was different from before. It was 'the hunter who was aiming at something' presence.

"About the Skull Face?"

"Yeah, it's the monster that appeared in the northern forest. Quite some time has passed since the rumor started circulating. However, this time it holds a stronger weapon than a Jack class usually does, and for the first time harm has been inflicted to someone."

"Oh, about that, I also saw it, too. Certainly, it swung a greatsword around."

"I thought Celica was surprised about the appearance of the Skull Face and the sword together, but it seems to be different matter."

"More precisely, it was really combined, even though I killed it."

Shin uttered the killing part in a low voice. When he talked to Celica, he had to say it out loud, because the surrounding noise was loud.

"...If that's true, I understand why Celica was flustered."

"That's right. It's not funny."

Els who joked around, stopped Shin's words. The Celica who just returned her composure, barely responded with agreeing words.

"Even though it's hard to doubt you, do you have any proof? It's not possible to trust you completely, even if you subjugated it."

"I only collected a jewel though. To begin with...what is the proof part of a

subjugated monster? I don't know what is it for Skull Face."

From the remnants of the game, Shin hadn't collected drop items that were common. He recalled the proof part for the guild and had completely forgotten that he could not prove that he subdued it if there was no proof.

"Did you collect the armor and the sword? Jack class certainly have good equipment, there are people who have sold it to increase their funds, and those who use it themselves."

Shin racked his brains about how to overturn the not trusting response of Els. Anyway, beside the greatsword that vanished in the sky, he didn't think that the helmet and the armor could be collected now.

"I wonder how much value such things have."

"Those don't seem like the words of an adventurer…"

"Exactly…"

From Shin's expression, Celica and Els understood that the words he muttered carelessly were the truth. Shin was strange. Though Els was said to be modest, she needed a considerable amount of funds to buy the same or equal quality equipment as the Jack • Skull Faces in this world. At least A and B ranks would not easily get their hands on it. It was natural that Shin, who treats it like that, was seen as strange. Because he implied that he didn't need it, and it was hardly said by other adventurers.

"Well, if the jewel get examined by an appraiser, it will be alright I guess. Because the jewel it dropped had the magical power of the monster charged, it should be revealed that it belonged to a Skull Face."

"Is that so?"

Els decided not to think too deeply, and let the jewel speak for itself if it turns out to be evidence. Though it takes time and was more difficult than the finding of other proof part, if he could prove that he had really subdued it, there was no problem even if some time was lost to some extent.

"But it will take a while, so the jewel will be kept here as it's being appraised. Though it's possible to sell it right away."

“Ah, this time I will pass. Because I don’t mean to sell it for the moment.”

“Alright then. I will contact the person in charge at the inn as soon as they finish appraising it. The inn is Bear Point Pavilion, correct?”

“Yes. Well then, thank you.”

Celica took over from Els’ speech and skillfully conveyed that it will take time. She was in complete working mode.

“That reminds me, why did the Skull Face appear so easily in the northern forest? I’ve heard that rumor before.”

“Originally the undead monster group was born because grudges and regrets of the living meets with magic power. Moreover, though ferocious monsters inhabit the northern forest, there was no end to the people who set foot in there, because there are precious medicinal herbs and materials to be collected. Subsequently, numerous people had lost their life because they were attacked by monsters. Therefore, the condition for the undead to be born was set. However, the appearance of a strong magical individual like the Jack class had not naturally occurred in that environment. Because normally in the northern forest, the Skull Face is a Pawn class.”

Els added that she thought Shin might have mistaken it for a Pawn class. Moreover, it seemed that no one has actually fought it for it to be confirmed its authenticity. Nobody tried to verify it expressly because it was no more than a rumor.

“By the way, what is the range level of a Jack class?”

“It is confirmed that the lowest is 150, and the highest is 250. It is classified as Queen and King class for levels beyond that.”

Apparently, the upper level limit for every monster did not seem to have changed somehow.

“Then. Will it be an exception this time?”

“What do you mean by that?” “What?”

Two people reacted to the words from Shin. As expected from staff of the

guild and an adventurer, it was a split second reaction.

“The Jack class which I fought had a level exceeding 250.”

“That, is that true?”

“No doubt about it because I saw with【Analyze】. I think it is probably a unique, or special monster. There were no Pawn class followers in the surrounding area unlike the normal one, too.”

“Just to confirm, what was its exact level?”

“It was 359. I think it was already a King class if my memory is correct.”

“359!?”

Jack class certainly appeared in【Analyze】, and in the first place, Queen and King class Skull Faces’ physique and equipment don’t match. When the level was excluded, the weapon and the movements were nonstandard, but there was nothing strange besides that.

“……”

Again, two people became speechless from Shin’s words. There were various questions that popped up inside their heads, such as ‘Should I believe it?’, ‘Is he mistaken?’ and so on.

“…Is there something wrong?”

“Rather than unpleasant…no…I seem to be confused. Celica, I guess there is probably a method that can roughly examine the opponents strength in the jewel, right? Then how about we try that?”

“――tsu! Then I will hasten the appraisal of the jewel. Els, I’m sorry, but please take care of the rest.”

As she replied to Els’ words, Celica bowed to Shin and took the jewel in his hand and headed for the other side of the reception desk.

As for the easygoing Shin, he felt admiration about the convenient method.

“Good grief, what a guy you are.”

“What?”

“If it’s true what you said about the level, your strength can be compared to at least an entire A rank party. But if it’s a lie, then you’re a great braggart.”

“Well, If it’s wrong, that means I saw it wrongly. Besides, isn’t my rank G? No one will believe if I said that I subdued a Jack class.”

“Though that is certainly so, if they don’t know the circumstances.”

“Then, that’s nice, I guess. Though I don’t mean to attract attention with the words I said until now.”

Although it felt like his words were contradicting his actions, Shin chose to not stand out because he didn’t want to be troubled by the attention towards him. Shin’s only purpose was to return to his former world, and joining the guild was an effective way to gather information.

“I reported it because if one would wander aimlessly to search for it and that would be bad, I guess. If possible, I don’t want it to be known that it was my doing.”

“Although I want to comply with your will, I think there will be people who investigate it even if I hide it. Because normally it’s natural to introduce oneself as the one who did it, right?”

“You have a point…”

Though Shin understood that, he felt it was bothersome as she said it clearly. There would be a commotion only for this. The adventurer that defeated it would be considerably famous, but it was too unnatural if the person chose not to divulge his name. It would be inevitable that people wanted to know the reason that he didn’t appear.

When it was revealed, it surely would attract attention if he was a G rank adventurer. It was troublesome no matter how it turned out.

“Sorry to trouble you, but it seems that I’m not able to help you with

much."

"I don't intend to put a burden on you there, so it's fine. For the time being, I have to find a meal to eat."

The problem wasn't solved from worrying meaninglessly. He decided to have lunch as a change of mood. Inside the guild was so crowded that hardly any seats left, so he decided to go outside the guild, to eat lunch.

◆◆◆◆

Since Els stayed in the guild, Shin walked on the main street alone. He headed for the restaurant which Els and Celica, who returned from the interior of the reception desk, recommended together.

After walking for a little while, the restaurant that hung out the signboard where a sword and fork were drawn, came into view. It was said that every chef were a former adventurer, and seemed to be offering exotic dishes such as dishes with rare ingredients and so on.

"Is it a fighting chef?...like Cook?"

He remembered the woman who did the cooking in the 'Rokuten', and a wry smile leaked out. She was particular about securing materials by herself, therefore she was an oddball whose stats were said to be on the verge of the maximum value.

To begin with, there was no oddball in the 'Rokuten', but the figure that handled a handiwork kitchen knife in both hands while preparing to cook a dragon left a strong impression in Shin.

"Just by remembering it makes me hungry..."

Because his stomach started to growl, he quickly opened the door. The restaurant was crowded, probably because he arrived during lunch break.

"Welcome. I'm sorry. You will have to wait a bit!!"

The voice which likened a bell resounded in the noisy restaurant. There was only one waitress who went back and forth between table and counter. Although he was hungry, he felt sorry for rushing it in this situation.

Shin stood quietly beside a door and looked at the restaurant interior. Was it because it was near the guild?, or because the restaurant manager was a former adventurer? Most of the people inside the restaurant were equipped with armor and weapons. They were probably the people who gathered because of the Skull Face, Shin guessed.

"Thank you for waiting. Let me guide you here…Isn't it Shin-san?"

"Yep? well, errr…Celica-san? No, is it Cilica-san?"

Although Shin was surprised at the sudden words, he could see properly that the hair was in a ponytail not like Celica's, so he noticed it was Cilica. He thought about whether Celica had changed her clothes again for an instant.

"That's correct. Is it because of a recommendation from Onee-chan that you have chosen this restaurant?"

"Yes. I'm grateful in various way."

"…Isn't it too early for an ordinary person to be recommended here."

"? Did you say something?"

Cilica muttered something with serious face for a moment. Though Shin felt inclined and asked, she just smiled and said nothing. Since pursuing it would be strange, the conversation stopped there. He didn't want to have a long conversation beside a door, too.

He was guided there when a group seemed to leave by chance, so one table was vacant. Shin felt awkward to use the table alone, but unfortunately the table for one person was filled. He gave the consent to Cilica that he wouldn't mind sharing the table when other visitors came, and then he ordered a dish.

"Uhm, Shin-san. Because a new visitor came, share the table, please. Thank you."

"Ah, yes. I understand."

Cilica turned up after Shin ordered a dish almost without pausing and

requested for him to share a table. The one who came over was a man who was also an adventurer with a spear which emitted a poisonous-looking radiance.

"...Is that 'Venom'?"

Shin muttered as the spear that could be said to be ominous was seen.

Devil spear 'Venom'——《Legend》grade that had the ability that could be compared with《Mythology》grade, was a weapon that had a clear distinction from《Rare》and《Unique》grade.

"Sorry to bother you."

"No, you saved me from trouble. I was hesitant to occupy the table alone"

While greeting lightly, Shin looked at the man. His height almost the same as Shin. His eyes were red and gathered his raven-black hair roughly behind his head. His skin was white like the skin of a sick person. Though he thought that the man had a good-looking face, Shin had the impression which stood contrary to his appearance. The man was like a wild beast. He had a sharp glint in his eyes, indicating that the man has made it through violent situations. In addition, he had the same composure to kill as a beast.

His level was 188. This man could probably defeat the normal Jack • Skull Face alone.

“I am Shin. This must be fate or something, too. Although it’s only for a short time, nice to meet you.”

“…There is still a guy who has not yet heard about me, huh? I’m Wilhelm Avis. Are you a new face among adventurers?”

“That’s right, it’s my third day today.”

Shin observed the man as he greeted him, and Wilhelm told him his name. Shin answered the question while looking puzzled to Wilhelm’s words.

Suddenly Shin noticed that all the visitors in the restaurant paid attention to him, although the surroundings were still noisy. But Shin was still a rookie adventurer. So it would be Wilhelm who attracted attention. Even though Shin did not understand the reason why Wilhelm attracted attention, he decided to leave it alone because there was no harm for the moment.

“Third day? That equipment is quite good for you. Are you employed as a mercenary?”

“No, well, you might say that it’s because I have traveled from a faraway country, I think. So I lack a little knowledge about the common sense here.”

“No wonder you don’t feel nervous when hearing my name. A normal adventurer and me wouldn’t share a table, I guess.”

“I don’t feel nervous? …What on earth did you do?”

Shin calmly asked about it, despite of the intimidation situation which seemed to caused some person break out in a cold sweat. The surrounding adventurers were thinking: “Why is this guy speaking with him overly familiar”, their hearts were all screaming together.

As for Shin, he didn’t feel the intimidation, not even in the slightest. It

was just a somewhat over-familiar question because he thought the man he saw had more or less never committed any crimes.

"No big deal particularly. I only killed undead monsters for quite some time. So people don't always approach the place I fought. It was said that I continue to fight to the point where I can absorb the undead's power."

"What is that?...I don't understand the meaning."

Shin didn't believe it was only that simple. He wondered whether or not it was a joke.

"I am the same, too. Well, a guy with a low ranked who believed this is a fool. The true reason is because I have this."

As he said so, Wilhelm grabbed the spear which leaned against the wall – the devil spear 'Venom'.

"This guy is 'Venom'. It is a weapon of the《Legend》grade, and it has the ability to absorb the vitality of the opponent it wounded, and share it with the user. Though it is a convenient thing,《Legend》or higher grade weapon means it possesses a power that can blow anyone away. But even if I use it, I don't understand the ability of this guy either."

"You use it, and you don't understand it either?"

"I noticed that I became the guy who was being detested. Additionally, the ability of my weapon is absorption <Drain>. Even allies were nervous at one time because of the absorption."

Because naturally there was no weapon description column in the game, he did not seem to know exactly what kind of effect the weapon had. Though it would actually be an absurd case if Shin knew the effect, it was because he wasn't from this world. At the same time, he was satisfied with the reason as to why the surrounding visitors were paying attention to them, then the【Appraisal】skill question emerged.

"Do you know it can get appraised?"

"Well, I have attempted to get it appraised you might say, but only the name and the grade was discovered. The current ability used can't be

confirmed.”

“What is skill level of the person who did the appraisal.”

“It was Ⅶ.”

Shin was convinced he knew why it was impossible from Wilhelm’s reply. The lowest skill level necessary for confirming the ability details of weapons of《Legend》grade was Ⅷ, Ⅸ in《Mythology》grade, and maximum level Ⅹ for the《Ancient》grade ones. When playing the game, merchants or blacksmiths could be requested immediately by players for appraising skills, but apparently in this world, it didn’t seem to be that easy.

The dish which he ordered was served as Shin was going to give up the topic. Wilhelm seemed to have already ordered his dish, as there was a dish that Shin didn’t remember ordering.

“For the time being, shall we eat?”

“Sure, let’s eat!”

After saying “Itadakimasu”, they immediately dig in. The dish Shin ordered was the grilled thigh with bone of the Aburidori monster. Shin’s nose was tickled as an indescribably fragrant aroma was shrouded as it made a sizzling sounds.

A fragrance of the spices mixed with meat juices impacted and filled his mouth the moment he bit in it. Crispy skin and the feel of the meat coming loose softly was irresistible for the hungry Shin.

“Delicious! This is delicious!!”

“...Settle down a little and eat.”

Wilhelm was a little amazed at Shin who was vigorously wolfing it down. Though he couldn’t say that himself, because Wilhelm was greedily ate the dish with a speed matching Shin’s.

For a while, they continued to eat in silence, and then each of them sipped a cup of black tea after the meal.

“I ate Aburidori for the first time after a long absence. Even it’s name made me think that oneself is warmed.” (T/N: Aburareru means warm; grill/scorch which is almost similar to the monster’s name, Aburidori)

“It was a little charred here though.”

It was a playful name, but still, the level range of the monster was about 100. It couldn’t fly although it was a bird type monster, and it was not alert and agile, but it could breathe out flame as it was the biggest characteristic according to its name. It was the monster which was strangely popular during the time of the game.

“That reminds me, was it okay to tell me the information on your weapon thoughtlessly? Isn’t it supposed to be concealed?”

“What I said earlier, it was widely known a long time ago. It won’t change anything even if I have only told a rookie now.”

“You have a point there.”

“I’m already done eating. See you then, newcomer”

“See you~”

Just like he said it to a friend, Shin saw Wilhelm off. The surroundings were noisy, but Shin didn’t mind it now.

Shortly after Wilhelm left, Shin left his seat, too.

The first meeting of a High Human Rokuten and a white figure welding a devil spear, was in fact a plain and simple one.

Chapter 4

THE NEW GATE

Shin, who left the restaurant, turned around on his foot toward the library. Even though the request was not completed yet, it didn't have a time limit. So he didn't need to hurry. From now on, because of his conduct during the last few days, he intended to carefully study the possible sense of an impending crisis.

"Is it here?"

Shin was at the middle point of the commercial and residential districts. Loud voices from energetic merchants could be heard occasionally. It was a quiet place compared to the commercial district.

And in front of Shin, there was a library standing tall before his eyes. The library, which was managed by the Bayreuth kingdom, was named the Royal Magic Library.

It seemed to have plenty of magic category books assembled together, but he was told by Tsugumi that the information about common knowledge that he didn't understand, could be found here. Though there were books that couldn't be read without permission inside, there was no problem, since Shin intended to only study within a readable scope at this time.

From the information desk, the chairs, tables, and the large quantity of bookshelves in the library, there was nothing special about it, nor were there features that could distinguish it from other libraries. Just in case, he received an explanation about the usage at the information desk, he summarized the matters that required attention, such as how he could only rent 3 books at a time, how there was a limit in amount of rental days, and how he was free to read inside the library, but how it would cost money if he borrowed one.

As for the rental cost, it was based on what kind of book it was, and how many days it was rented for. Of course, if a book was lost, there would be a fine. The general rule for the books which required permission to be read, was that it was prohibited to rent them, and there were books that couldn't be read without certain social status and/or trust such as the senior adventurers and the court service officers.

If there was a valuable book, one would think that a thief would break

into the library. But there were guards and soldiers who kept watch on the surroundings in the building. In addition, they also had the skill for crime prevention, so no fellow could act violently.

(Is it level Ⅷ【Barrier】and【Wall】? So that's why they are so full of confidence.)

Although he doubted that the skill barrier used was stronger than the rampart, he still admired that the barriers were never broken since from the very beginning.

After receiving the explanation, he was instructed where the books of which field were located at. Then, he gathered books around the library and sat down on a empty seat.

First, the history. After all, Shin thought that the first thing he had to do was to investigate about the 'Dusk of the Majesty', which seemed to be connected to the simultaneous logout from the death game. Because there was a chronology which listed the big events since the country was founded in the book, he opened it at once.

"First of all, from the recent events. Um, it's the 511th years now from when the country was founded, huh? Because it's said that the 'Dusk of the Majesty' occurred 500 years ago, and it was almost in the same time period as the founding of the country."

He traced back the chronological table to the past while looking puzzled due to the strange coincidence. There were numerous things related to the national administration that were written, such as the conclusion of the alliance, the kings taking over, funerals, wars, large-scale constructions, and so on. As he looked at the end of the chronology, which was the part about the country's founding.

"No info about the 'Dusk of the Majesty' is written here, not even a little."

Only the founding of the Bayreuth kingdom was written about in the chronology, anything that happened earlier than that wasn't written about.

"Well, it's a chronology after all. I guess that it was written about in other books."

He opened another history book while pulling himself together. However, most of the content in the opened books did not describe in detail the 'Dusk of the Majesty'.

Though he read several history books afterward, the conclusion was still the same. Only one of the books seemed to have written about the event.

"The world has changed after that day…"

The king left, the country disappeared, and it was written that the world had changed, but it was not written clearly about what happened to the world afterwards. Apparently, after the 'Dusk of the Majesty', there was temporary chaos around the world, but the 'Dusk of the Majesty' was not described in detail. It seemed odd that there was so little recorded in the book about the players' logout, where they were thought to have vanished.

He took out one of the books from the mountain of books while thinking that no book could provide him with the info he wanted.

It seemed to be a book about races, and each feature and characteristic was briefly described.

Human —— They have the highest number in population, and there were a lot of countries, too. When a kingdom was established, the ruler was called a King.

Dragnil —— Power and vitality were prominently high, have a long life. It can transform into the shape of a human. When an empire was established, the king was called a Dragnil King.

Beast —— They have the highest number in population next to humans, they are keen and nimble, and have different characteristics in every tribe. When the tribe was gathered together and formed an alliance, the chief was called a Beast King.

Lord —— There was a little bias about their ability, also no ability that seemed prominent, but as a whole, their abilities have the tendency to be high. When the empire was established, the king was called a Devil King.

Dwarf —— They have skillful hands and are good at making armor and tools. They were scattered in every country and formed a guild which had

the tendency to share their technique and craft. The best craftsman was called a Cave King.

Pixie —— They are the longest living race, they excelled at magic handling. The pixies were divided between the ones who lived in this world, and the ones who lived in the fairy village in the other world, which exchange with each other. The king was called a Fairy King.

Elf —— Their lifespans come 2nd after the pixies, not only magic, but also their crisis perception ability was high. They lived in the woods. Young elves often appeared outside the village. The village was called the garden, and the chief was called the Forest King.

There were no contents that differed from Shin's knowledge. Although Shin momentarily felt a sense of incongruity for the dwarf's best craftsman, who was called the Cave King, he remembered that there was a setting where dwarves originally lived in caves.

Because there was a chance that an Elf or Pixie might know about the 'Dusk of the Majesty', he made sure to memorized that part.

"Now then, what should I read next?"

He decided to investigate as long as the time permitted, and opened the next book.

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While Shin was doing the investigation in the library, executives, such as Barlux and Els, were preparing for a meeting in a room of the adventurers' guild.

Of course, the agenda was the Skull Face. Even though the situation called for waiting for the appraisal of the jewel, the members that had some free time were gathered for the time being. There was a possibility that the information was accurate, because the one who reported was said to hold a letter of introduction. Since the Skull Face had already been defeated, the sense of urgency was not high, but the Shin's personality in the report of Barlux and Els was raised to some extent.

Though the man called Shin seemed to be easily trusted, there was never

a case where a dangerous person held the letter of introduction, so it gave the report some credibility.

"Well then, let's start the special meeting."

All the members in the room directed their attention to Barlux in response to his voice.

"Though there are people who have already heard this, the Jack • Skull Face that appeared in the northern forest was subdued. The one who subdued it only collected a jewel, which is currently under investigation."

"The Jack class was subdued and neither the sword nor the armor were collected?"

All the members looked puzzled due to the words from Barlux, who reported plainly. The first one to speak was Ardi, who was just dispatched as a liaison from the kingdom. The mage, Arad Royl, who was in charge of the appraisal of the jewel, nodded as he had the same kind of doubt. Kylie Ein, who was the sub-master, and Els, who knew about the circumstances, had no reaction. Then Barlux continued.

"The person told me that the sword and armor were not a big deal."

"Not a big deal?…"

Ardi had the expression of someone who didn't understand. Arad was laughing "hohoho" while combing down his beard.

"To declare something like that, it seems that this man's wealth is quite considerable."

Although Arad's hair and beard were white-colored because of his old age, due to his well-developed back muscles, which were tightly visible, he didn't look as old as he was. The way he laughed suited the good-natured old man.

"The fellows who hold the introduction letter are generally thoughtless fellows. They don't care about losing their life, especially the young ones."

"Is that so?"

“Wait! Wait! Though I have no obligation to say this, we are not that thoughtless.”

“It’s not convincing when guild master says so.”

Ardi was about to believe Arad’s claim as common sense. But Barlux interfered, and was put down by Els.

“Well, let’s go back to the jewel case. I don’t know the details yet, but apparently there are no mistakes, at least about the story of its level being 359.”

“Still. It would be nice if the proof part was collected. The problem is whether or not a similar monster has appeared.”

It was likely a little joking, and the moderate tension became loose from Arad’s honest report. Because there was no one excelling Arad in jewel appraisal in the guild, it was decided that a Skull Face that had the level of at least a King class had appeared.

“The staff that’s skillful in searching has already gone out to investigate it. The information will be assembled tomorrow.”

Kylie complemented in a calm tone. Black hair held together with a barrette, light brown pupils and long-narrow eyes could be seen from the interior of her glasses. The secretary of Barlux had good looks and skill combined, and a sword could be seen at her hips.

“As usual, Kylie did her work fast. The guild master should follow her example.”

“Our sub-master is excellent, old man Royl.”

“Can Barlux-sama focus on your work a little more?”

“Urgh”

“She has no mercy.”

A few words from Kylie break the joke from Barlux. Barlux was not bad at office work particularly, but Kylie still seemed to be dissatisfied with him.

"....."

"Hmm, were you surprised that this is different than you thought?"

"No, well you might say, because I thought that the feeling of tension should remain a little bit."

Arad asked Ardi, who was taken aback by the dialogue of the three people. He seemed to have a serious personality. Ardi said modestly, and yet he showed a slightly perplexed expression.

"Well it's a usual case. Besides, this is something like a petty liaison meeting, rather than a conference. If this was a state of emergency, each district chief and S rank adventurers would gather here."

"Still, only one Skull Face has been reported, right?"

Ardi understood that it was not an emergency situation, because only five people gathered, but he thought he might be too optimistic. Arad, who read Ardi's mind, complemented Ardi so he revealed his true feelings.

"It seems so. To be honest, there is no knowing how many such monsters are out there, and there is a reason to do an assessment."

"Is it the barrier's protection?"

"Yes. Do you know about it?"

"It's the barrier against monsters. It is said that monsters from outside the barrier will not be allowed to come near."

"That's right, the first King erected the barrier. Therefore, even if a strong monster is born, they can't come inside the barrier. It also has the effect of silencing strong dark magic. In addition, we are being vigilant ourselves, too."

The technique from the time the kingdom was founded was still protecting the Bayreuth kingdom. That was the reason why the amount of strong monsters that had appeared so far, hadn't increased.

However, neither the kingdom nor the guild considered the barrier

absolute, no matter how well it defended. In response to the Skull Face report, the knights' group was prepared, so they could sally out by the thoroughgoing condition in the kingdom. Also, the subjugation report was not confirmed at the moment, so the adventurers were still waiting for orders and were working hard to gather information.

"Skull Faces become active at night. Ardi, in preparation for the worst case, I want you to contact the knight leader and raise the alertness order by one rank."

"Roger that."

Barlux spoke during the gap of the conversation between Ardi and Arad. The flustered state just a while ago seemed hard to believe. Judging from Arad, Kylie and Els' attitude, it was probably a usual thing.

"That's all from me. Does anyone have any other opinions? If not, I assume we are done."

Arad, Els and Kylie thought it was over regarding the main report of the Skull Face from Barlux. However, Ardi raised his hand and Barlux nodded to let him convey his opinion.

"The Skull Face this time had a different weapon from the information we obtained. I would like you to give me detailed information on the person who subdued the Skull Face, so the investigation about the weapon can become clear after this."

"Hmm, though there is no intention to cover up information about the weapon, I can't reveal anything about the person who subjugated it, as it was his wish. Still, if it's alright, lets take responsibility for it. I wonder about why you are making a fuss about this, may I hear the reason?"

"Yes. Though the story changed a little, does everyone know about the sword that flew to the royal castle?"

Naturally all the members nodded back. If there was no disturbance by the Skull Face, it would have been a hot topic by now.

"The Skull Face was subdued on the day when the sword flew to the royal castle, furthermore, the Skull Face that appeared this time was

equipping a greatsword that was different from the normal ones. There is only one person who can connect these together, I think."

Everyone except Ardi imagined one person from his remark.

"May I hear what kind of sword it was?"

"There's a condition you must adhere to, or I can't disclosed the information."

All members agreed on Ardi's condition. There was no person that didn't know the importance of the information in this place.

"The sword's blade is about 2 mels long and the material is a demon steel mixed with an alloy of mithril. Moreover, the sword has permanent light attribute magic bestowed upon it. If it is put side by side with our country's treasured sword, then the treasured sword seems to be poorly made."

"!?"

Everyone couldn't hide their surprise at his words. Speaking of the treasured sword of the Bayreuth kingdom, even at the lowest rank, it was a weapon that was classified as《Legend》grade. It was a national treasure grade of weapon that almost no person could forge, so there were no equal swords in existence right now. Let alone that a person thought that the Skull Face held it.

Because he was in the middle of a fight, Shin didn't notice as he did not use the appraisal skill. He thought the greatsword of the Skull Face was of the lowest grade, but it had a self-restoration ability which was higher than《Rare》and《Unique》.

"If it's assumed that the Skull Face had the greatsword, then the person in question is indomitable, as the enemy had a weapon at the treasured sword level in addition to a high level was subjugated. But no need to worry, as it is impossible I think. Besides that, I was a little troubled by it..."

Though the worry about the strength of the person at hand was understandable, Barlux, who doubted the indescribably, indecisive of Ardi's speech in the latter half, asked.

“Troubled by it?”

The content which Ardi recited was indeed true, although he had only guessed, and nobody came to have conclusive evidence, because there was no one who knew about the greatsword in detail. It was said that it was impossible for undead to have a weapon with the light attribute in this world.

“As for this, news may reach Barlux-dono soon, as it is likely to be announced grandly. Until then, please don’t tell anyone for the time being.”

“Hmm, understood. Should others leave this place?”

“Because the permission is given, it doesn’t matter, as I follow the same condition as a while ago. Since there is a possibility that everybody will know, too.”

Though everyone except Barlux had a question about the announcement place, they nodded for the time being, and then speech was urged to be started.

“Actually…”

Afterwards, everyone who was present was perplexed about the content that leaked out of Ardi’s mouth.

◆◆◆◆

For several hours, he had been investigating things in the library. Somehow the library was closed when the sun was a little high in the evening. When Shin confirmed it with the menu screen, the time showed 4:50. Even though he didn’t know whether the time was accurate, Shin thought that every city hall and post office had their own way to keep track of the time. Rather, he was amazed to learn that they had about the same closing time.

He thought about returning to the south district for the time being, but his stomach was grumbling while looking around the stalls. It was early, but he bought yakitori* for dinner which he saw was barbecued nicely in a stall he found by chance. It could be said that a similar yakitori wasn’t sold in Japan, as they were 30 cemels long skewers stuck into hearty chicken

meat. (T/N: *a bite-size marinated pieces of beef, seafood, or chicken on skewers)

“This yakitori tastes good even in a different world…but did I buy too much?”

He took out a freshly cooked skewer from a bag while smiling wryly. He bought four yakitori. It was a quantity that could be said was too much to eat before dinner.

He sat down on the edge of the fountain in the center of the square to relax after walking and eating. He stuffed his mouth with meat while looking at the passersby for no particular reason.

After all, there were still many appearances of adventurers since the information regarding the Skull Face was published.

Although information regarding the subjugation completion was also made public, the adventurers seemed to be still on guard.

“…Tsu…tsu”

While looking at the hustle of the town and chewing on the yakitori, after he had investigated, he organized the information he had acquired in his head. There were three noteworthy things that he understood for now.

First, the book that had written about the ‘Dusk of the Majesty’ was rare.

Besides that, there was also a possibility that the book was banned or that it was stored in a place with reading restrictions. For now, Shin couldn’t enter that place, so it was put on hold. In the future, he couldn’t help but to feel prepared to visit villages of long-lived species such as Elves or Dragnils. Either way, he still didn’t have the intention to sneakily search for it.

Second, the geography of this world.

Originally, four continents existed in the world of THE NEW GATE, the 1st three continents were for beginner, intermediate and advanced level players. And the 4th continent became the area for players who had lost interest in the common fields.

Of course, Shin had almost conquered all four areas that were displayed on the map, but now the map function was no longer recognizable. The reason was simple, it was because the continental shape itself had changed due to a natural phenomenon that took place after the 'Dusk of the Majesty'. Through movements and ground upheavals, the 4 continents turned into 5, and a lot of small island nations were scattered. This might be one of the causes for there being no documents about the 'Dusk of the Majesty'.

By the way, the continent where Shin was currently at, was called the Continent of Eltnia.

Third, the big city that was formerly the headquarter base of adventurers.

Each continent had two or three big cities that became the headquarter base for the players. Each city featured an enhanced defense and the city's trades were lively, it was also crowded although there was prejudice in certain races and jobs. One of the reasons why people gathered there was only because big cities have temples that could be used for reincarnation.

Those big cities were now called the 'Sacred Place', and were also seen as targets to be recaptured. Though the big cities that existed were mostly the same without being affected by natural disasters, after the 'Dusk of the Majesty', each city turned into a demon city dominated by high-level monsters. The investigation committee was sent on countless occasions, but the lowest level of monsters exceeded 500, and it was said that anyone who entered the 'Sacred Place' would never return.

For some reason, the high-level monsters of the 'Sacred Place' never came outside the cities, and the overflowing magical power caused the surrounding land and plants to mutate. In addition, the current conditions had also caused sudden mass outbreaks of low-level monsters.

"Then, the problem is?"

He contemplated while putting his hand on his chin. If the topography itself had changed, then his memory from during the time of the game was unreliable. The locations of Elf's garden and the Pixie's fairy village or the other places with long-lived species, were different from his memory, too.

Information collection was likely to be difficult.

"Hmmph…?"

Just when he thought about asking Tiera and Els, Shin looked up because he felt someone's gaze. Shin turned his face to the direction of the gaze and saw a cat-eared girl, probably at elementary to primary school student age, who was staring at Shin from 2 mels away.

"……"

"……"

"…Drool"

"Oi…"

Correction. The cat-eared little girl was intently staring at the skewer that Shin held. Somehow, her strong desire could be seen.

"……"

"Uum…"

"……"

"Errr…"

"……"

"…Do you want to eat it?"

The little girl's intense staring was interrupted by Shin. Besides her desire which were completely revealed, her innocent eyes caused Shin to feel bad.

Since he thought that he bought too many anyway, he took out a freshly cooked skewer from the bag while holding his half-eaten skewer in his mouth, and presented it to the girl.

Shin intended to say "Do you want to eat it?", but only gave off the

incomprehensible words “Fu fu ah it” as a result of having a skewer in his mouth.

Though it was not certain, was she able to decipher Shin’s pronunciation? Or was it simply because of the act of presenting the skewer to her. The little girl lightly ran toward Shin and with quick “Shu~batsu” sound effect, she took the skewer from Shin by force. She sat next to him as she began to stuff the yakitori into her mouth. The moment when their eyes met, her cat ears went “Syu~pin!”, even Shin was a little surprised.

“Mugumugu…Hamuhamu” (T/N: munching with closed mouth sfx and bite chew sfx)

They ate the meat silently for a while. When Shin looked at the girl working hard to fill her small mouth, he was able to confirm her appearance. Somehow it made Shin feel heartwarming.

The words young vagrant and beggar appeared on Shin’s mind in addition from it. But, he denied those kind of words immediately when he saw the appearance of the girl.

Her clothes had been mended here and there, but she wore the clothes properly, and there was no emaciation either. Also, there was no sign of aiming at one’s wallet. There might be a person who raised her with at least a home to return to, Shin judged.

“Whew, thanks for the delicious meal.”

“Mm, you’re welcome.”

After she finished eating the last bit neatly, the girl bowed to Shin.

“Onii-chan, a good person.”

“Oh, thank you.”

Shin looked at the little girl with a small laugh. From the cat ears, he understood that the girl might be a beast which belonged to the feline family. Only the tips of her yellow hair were dyed light brown, and he wondered if she was a Tiger Type. Because 30% of the population of the Bayreuth kingdom were Beast as he learned from a chat with Tsugumi, it

was not particularly rare.

“I, Millie. Onii-chan?”

“Name? I am Shin, just Shin.”

“Together with Millie”

“Together?”

“Millie too, just Millie.”

“Ooh, indeed together.”

‘Shin’ was not a surname because the name he used exactly his player name. Particularly, because it wasn’t pointed out and he didn’t see any problems keeping his name as it was during the registration in the guild. It seemed that the thought of a timid Millie had disappeared, and she seemed to be looking delightful.

“Now then, I have finished eating the meat and I have to go soon, but what will Millie do? Should I send you home?”

“It’s alright. Pick me up, came.”

“Huh? No way! Pick you up…?”

The direction where Millie pointed to, Shin was unable to hide his surprise about the figure that walked toward them.

When the figure noticed that Millie was with Shin, it quickened its pace to approach them.

“Oh! We meet again, Shin.”

“It’s been awhile since the lunch, Wilhelm.”

A raven-haired man who had the presence of a beast greeted Shin. So, when Millie said pick up, it was none other than Wilhelm Avis.

“Wil-nii!”

Millie ran and clung to Wilhelm. Shin was astonished at the unexpected development.

“No way, Wilhelm’s…child?”

“That’s not it! I am taking care of her at the orphanage!”

“Orphanage?”

“Ah, that reminds me, it hasn’t been that long since you came to this country.”

While patting Millie’s head, Wilhelm briefly explained. According to him, a church in the west district was doubling as an orphanage and seemed to be taking care of children who lost their parents in some kind of circumstances. Millie was one of them.

“This fellow skillfully sneaked out from the orphanage some time ago. I was searching for her like a fool.”

“Did you go out without permission? I can’t really admire that.”

“Uu, sorry, I am”

Millie, who was aware she had done a bad thing, apologized obediently. The cat ears also went “Shu~n*…” as one would expect in fantasy.

“Even so, it’s unusual for this person to not be afraid like this.”

“Afraid?”

“I don’t understand after what I have seen today, but this person is afraid of strangers. She doesn’t approach strangers at their first meeting.”

“Is that so?”

Only tempted by the meat, Shin thought, but Millie shook her head. Was she able to read Shin’s thoughts? It seemed likely he hit the bull’s-eye. And for some reason, it felt like she said “You must not say it”.

“Well, I don’t want to stay here for too long. Come on Millie, let’s go

home."

"Wait!"

Said Millie as she ran toward Shin.

"What's wrong?"

"Ear, lend."

"Like this?"

Shin squat down and brought his ear close to Millie's mouth. Millie, who ran toward Shin in the same way as she did to Wilhelm, whispered words to Shin's ear.

"Bye-bye."

Shin saw Millie off as she was led by Wilhelm and disappeared into the crowd.

He walked toward Bear Point Pavilion while thinking about the words he was told by Millie.

After he returned to Bear Point Pavilion, Shin took a rest in his room as he had some free time before dinner.

He sat on the bed and recalled the words Millie whispered, in his head.

"Help the fox-san which is in the northern forest...huh?"

During the time of the game, he was able to determine what to expect from the area information, but unfortunately, he couldn't make an inference now, since the topography had greatly changed.

He tilted his head in doubt about whether or not there would be a fox. At least, a fox type monster never attacked Shin. The monsters which were similar to a bear, a snake, and a dog were often found and occasionally a flight type appeared.

Other wild animals were extremely rare because there were a lot of

monsters, and it was snakes and rats that he saw the most. A monster was a wild animal that mutated under the influence of magical power, so naturally there were common animals. Still, he didn't remember seeing a fox before.

"It's no good, I don't know nothing about it."

The answer didn't appear no matter how much he thought about it. But she said "help". That might be something imminent. Especially the area of the northern forest in the vicinity of the Bayreuth kingdom, where the risk was quite high.

She might have judged Shin as an adventurer because he was an acquaintance of Wilhelm's, although it seemed strange that she requested Shin during their first meeting.

It was not something that he must do just because it was requested. However, if he didn't do anything, it would leave a bitter feeling. Shin decided to plan for tomorrow as well as for Millie's request. Incidentally, he intended to meet Tiera, and finish the message to Schnee.

"So I have decided...meal it is."

The yakitori had already been digested. Shin went downstairs to eat dinner.

◆◆◆◆

Dawn of the next day.

Shin departed from Bear Point Pavilion and passed through the main street where there were crowded stalls towards the south gate. When he exited from the gate, there were people lining up to enter the country, in contrast to Shin who was leaving.

Shin moved along the rampart, while ignoring the people. Tsuki no Hokora was located between the south gate and the east gate, in fact, it was closer to the south gate. The place where trees opened came into view after walking for a little while.

As before, there were huge trees enclosing Tsuki no Hokora with about a

1 mel thickness, it gave off the impression that it was separated from its surroundings. It was because Tsuki no Hokora was originally built at the outskirts of the Arclid continent, which was one of the 4 continents. The ground where Shin lived, which was the Eltnia continent, might originally have been part of the Arclid continent.

The Arclid continent was an even more superior area than the Houzent continent, the area of advanced level players. Moreover, there were originally many quests and monsters which had a higher degree of difficulty than in the common areas of the other three continents. Besides, there were also quests that beginner and intermediate players could receive, but players who yearned for unusual quests, wanted to fight with strange monsters, had often visited there. In a sense, the players were mostly gathered regardless of their levels and jobs.

It could be said that the visitors who came to Tsuki no Hokora, due to being built in the outskirt area, were mostly advanced level players. Seldom there were players who sought shelter after escaping from monsters. By the way, the average level of monsters in the area where Tsuki no Hokora was built was around 600. Meanwhile the lowest slightly exceeded 200, and needless to say, the highest was 1000. It was in the past, but the store was set up casually near the habitat of a boss monster. Even the players replenished their items in Tsuki no Hokora before challenging the boss.

“If I think about it… I wonder what happened to the monsters that were in the Arclid continent. They certainly should have gotten on when the continents stuck together. Did they perish along with the natural disasters?”

Certainly, if the monsters still existed, the Bayreuth kingdom would be destroyed. Anyway, there was monsters with the habit akin to ants, too. The monsters’ levels exceeded 600 and appeared in random areas altogether. It was annoying to the advanced level players, the intermediate level players ran away or went around it, and beginner level players had no choice but to acknowledge death and return. A place where most of the people gathered, such as a country and so on, was unlikely to be targeted, but because of the rate of the encounters rose, the number of party members was increased.

However, he still didn’t know, no matter how much he thought about it.

Since damage was not dealt, were some measures taken? Anyway, there might be a reason as to whether the monsters that perished appeared or not. He was convinced that one would not be able to establish the country and the roads if it was not so, and he stopped thinking about it for a moment. In fact, it might be possible that there were different continent grounds outside the surroundings of Tsuki no Hokora.

He kept his questions to himself and stood in front of Tsuki no Hokora. When he visited a few days ago, he was relieved that the store still existed and did not notice it, but a wooden tally about 20 cemels across vertically and 10 cemels wide hung at the door which was the entrance of the store. It had the letters『The storekeeper struggles hard inside』on it. This expressed that Tsuki no Hokora was doing business normally. And it had the letters『The storekeeper has left home』on the back. This expressed the closing time for the store from material collecting or not being logged in and so forth.

He opened the door while admiring that the wooden tally was still being used and entered the store. When Shin stepped forward in the store by one step, a light “Chiri~n” sound of the bell was made. It would ring when someone entered the store. Apparently, the knights didn’t show up today.

“Welcome! Oh, Shin.”

“Yo, I came to leave a message I had forgotten about.”

When she saw that it was Shin who entered, Tiera’s expression changed from a smile into a happy face. The silvery hair that had returned to its original hair shined because of the light from the windows.

“That reminds me, I completely forgot about that.”

When she heard Shin’s speech, she did the expression “Ah!” as if she remembered something she had forgotten. Still, there was no help for forgetting about it when he thought about the previous event.

“Then, I want you to convey to her that I want to meet and talk if she remembers this.”

Shin said and placed an object, which he took out from his Item Box, on

the counter.

It was a dark blue ninja sword, there were flowers engraved on the sheath and handle, which Tiera had never seen before. It was well engraved in such detail, which turned the ninja sword weapon into a work of art.

"....."

"...Tiera?"

"...Oh!"

Shin called out to Tiera who was staring at the ninja sword. Tiera abruptly returned due to his voice.

"What's the matter?"

"Hey Shin, This...is this by any chance an《Ancient》grade weapon?"

Tiera looked at the ninja sword with an 'impossible' face. As if she was seeing a dazzling thing, she squinted her eyes.

"You know? This guy is certainly an《Ancient》grade weapon. This is Schnee's personal weapon, named『Blue Moon』."

"Master's personal weapon?"

"That's right, if I'm not mistaken, Schnee might not be using her personal weapon now, right?"

"Well, to begin with, I don't know what a personal weapon is..."

"You don't know?"

Shin, who thought it was certainly known, was surprised that the words personal weapon wasn't known.

"The personal weapon was set...uh, it's the weapon which only an authorized person can use. In the case of『Blue Moon』, only Schnee or the companion whom she had permitted can use it, excluding me who is the

maker. Because if I leave it, then even if it's Tiera who is trying to, you cannot touch this guy without permission."

It was a function in the game that was granted to items, and could be accepted as a reward in the time of an event so it couldn't be snatched. It was granted to weapons he made as a symbol of the guild.

There were few people who were able to grant the function of personal weapon, because only the first-class of blacksmiths and alchemists could produce it.

"The user's limitation…come to think of it, I have heard that some of the weapons excavated from ruins are not usable to anyone. Perhaps it's because of that?"

"It was probably someone's personal weapon. If that's that case, even if the weapon was discovered, there's no way to use or even research it. Only weapons that are higher than《Legend》grade can be granted the function of personal weapon, so it was definitely a high power. Even a guy with level 1 becomes able to defeat a Tetra Grizzly easily, but only if he is able to use the weapon."

"…What an outrageous ability."

Tiera couldn't help but be amazed by the performance that was far beyond expectation. One would be dubious if they only heard the explanation, but when the ninja sword, which hid an absurd power, was placed before one's eyes, they had no choice but to believe it.

Shin casually placed the ninja sword『Blue Moon』on the counter. However, to Tiera it looked like the『Blue Moon』had a distorted appearance around it. Tiera understood how powerful it was, even if she didn't have much battle experience.

"It is certainly a sword with remarkable power. But I don't want to use it."

"Oh, for what reason would you not use it?"

"Because it looks like it's going to engulf me, I wonder."

Tiera intuitively understood, and was convinced at the same time. This certainly gave the user a great power. But if there was no ability to correspond with it, it would undermine the user.

"Engulf…huh? It's probably because of its materials."

When Tiera's words were heard, the first thing that came to Shin's mind was the penalty generated when equipping weapons that did not correspond with one's level. A necessary stats value was set for each weapon. In addition, status would be lowered when equipping a weapon in the state where one didn't reach said necessary stats value. One portion of《Legend》grade,《Mythology》grade and《Ancient》grade were impossible for him to equip at all. (Editor's note: The reason for "one portion" part is probably because of Shin's LUC only 36)

However, he thought that the phrase 'to engulf' was different, so he decided to explain what materials the weapon was made of.

"Really? What did you use?"

"The main alloy is called Chimeradite. And there is the tusk of a Black-Death Dragon, scales of a Sea-War Beast, and teardrops of an Element Tail, all which were fused together. The four materials I mentioned just now are the main ones, although there were various other essential materials. It's a guess, but it's probably caused by the tusk of the Black-Death Dragon or by the scales of the Sea-War Beast. Both monsters are the highest class."

"……"

"Tiera?"

Although Tiera heard the explanation from Shin, it could be said that she couldn't comprehend it, as she put her hand on her forehead and wrinkles were seen in the area between her eyebrows.

"…No, I'm not surprised anymore. Yeah, for example, even if what I heard just now are the creatures of legends…I'm all right. Yes, it's all right."

"No, you don't look alright at all."

Shin instinctively retorted to Tiera who was shaking her head to the

sound of the common sense in herself crumbling.

As usual, Shin still wasn't accustomed to the norms of this world, although this time the common sense was even further out of place. Which wasn't surprising, because the monsters Shin spoke of were currently nothing but names that held a mighty power and were remembered only in legends. One would think it was a joke when told that the material was made from monsters that had the power to induce natural disasters.

"Haa, my common sense seems to be shattered one by one whenever I talk to you."

"Eh, because of me?"

"Of course. You casually take out an《Ancient》grade weapon, even impossibility has its limits, you know?"

"Even if you say so, whether or not Schnee remembers me will depend on this."

Shin said while looking at the『Blue Moon』. Schnee's personal equipment was entrusted to Shin before he challenged Origin. This was done not only by Schnee, but by all support characters as well. It was considered something like a good luck charm before Shin fought against the final boss. Thus now, other support characters' equipment were also waiting for their turn inside Shin's Item Box.

Unless Shin met Schnee directly, there was also a possibility that the message wasn't read by her. Since the name 'Shin' might be a common name, he thought about leaving an item.

"Though such things are handed over, the people who are able to meet master are rare. But with a person like you, master might…"

Similar with Shin, Tiera looked at the『Blue Moon』while nodding as she was convinced.

So far, expensive clothes, jewels, and various rare items were sent. Nevertheless, the figure of her master who didn't show any interest appeared in Tiera's mind. Because she could easily imagine, her master wasn't interested even in items that were equivalent to《Legend》grade

and would simply not look at the various expensive items.

Even though Schnee ignored the《Legend》grade items, Tiera slightly deviated a bit from her evaluation of her master's interest for『Blue Moon』.

"Use this if she says that she remembers. It should contact me wherever I am."

He said and put a message card and writing paper with a simple design next to the『Blue Moon』.

"I can contact you by using this?"

"Yes, though it's only one-way. Write the name of the addressee on the writing paper and the message you want to send here. After that, you only need say 'send'."

Shin explained the usage while pointing at the writing paper and the message card. It was an item used often on birthday and Christmas in the game. There were people who made an elaborate card which induced a fancy special effect the moment it was opened.

The item was only used at certain times, because normally it was faster to email in the game, but it was certainly a convenient item, because in the first place, functions such as email and friend list were not usable in this world.

"Items as convenient like this exist too…"

"I do not use it too much and there are plenty left."

The item was rarely used, even if he got many message cards and a lot of writing paper as quest and event rewards. Though they were not really useful in the 'game', the items were unexpectedly handy in 'reality'.

"If this thing becomes popular, I think that would be amazing."

"I guess so."

It could reach the addressee wherever they were, if viewed from Tiera's point of view, it was equivalent to a technology revolution.

Unfortunately, Shin didn't have any interest in initiating a technology revolution. In the first place, the items now were the things that originally existed in THE NEW GATE. Someone might invent it sooner or later, Shin thought.

"...Hey, I think rather than requesting me to pass on the message, aren't you able to contact master directly with this?"

Tiera said like someone who suddenly thought about it while holding the message card with one hand.

"Well, actually, I can only send this to someone I have met directly, but I was not able to send it to Schnee, whom I should have met, for some reason."

Shin also thought it was a good idea to send it directly. However, for some reason, the message was not sent and he was not able to contact Schnee. To begin with, it was a mystery why a message card was usable but an email was not.

Was there a defect in the card? He ran outside to show it to Tiera in practice, and sent the message. Tiera was surprised at the writing paper which suddenly appeared in front of her, but at least he seemed to understand that the item was not defective.

(It looks like the list was reset.)

This would be the reason why he was not able to send it, Shin guessed.

There was one sentence, "Let's send your feelings to people whom you've met in adventures", in the explanation column of the message card. For example, he would not be able to send the message to a person he had never met before in this world, even if he had met them in the game era, Shin thought.

"Ne ne~, can I get additional ones if you have any more?"

"Though I don't mind it in particular, I think you should not use it with someone who doesn't know about this."

"Rather than use it, I want to research it. Even though I may appear this

way, I want to know the mechanism when I look at this unusual magic item, because I aim to be a mage."

In fact, ever since he used the message card, Tiera had sparkling eyes like a child that had found a fun toy.

"Well, if that's the case, it's good then. So I will give you another five. Don't use them all, since it includes the one for Schnee's response, okay? And because I give you this, please make it an appropriate service for the message fee."

Shin didn't think it was a good idea to distribute the items just because they were in excess, he proposed that at least a trial run for the free message service was needed.

"I understand. Be relieved, because I have no intention to use it thoughtlessly. It will turn into a commotion if poorly used on someone. And I do not mean for you to give this to me for free. For the time being, the price for the message is free of charge. You can expect compensation for the rest, as well."

The outcome seemed to gain him some privilege, in addition to the price becoming free. When he reconfirmed that it was valuable after all, Shin made a mental note to avoid using it in public places.

As for Tiera, she wondered what to test it on, and seemed to be happy. It was Shin who thought that she should aim to be an alchemist if she liked to research, but did not say it expressively, because a mage didn't necessarily not engage in research. Actually, there were many players with job: mage, sub job: alchemist.

"Then, that's all from me. My best regards to Schnee."

"Leave it to me. I will have master see it first, when master returns."

Shin exchanged goodbyes and left Tsuki no Hokora.

I could use the message card to send it right away! Tiera realized, shortly after Shin left.

◆◆◆◆

After leaving Tsuki no Hokora, Shin went straight to the northern forest. Since encountering the guild's staff that came to investigate the Skull Face would be troublesome, he advanced while confirming that there was no one in the surrounding area.

He didn't have the direction, so he depended mostly on his instinct. But he aimed at the depths of the forest first, because the depths of the forest felt somehow suspicious. Still, because he thought that the encounter with the investigators could not be avoided when he went to the place where the Skull Face appeared, he advanced toward the opposite direction of where the Skull Face was. It was the direction he did not walk when he came here before.

The position where the Skull Face existed was the southeast of the northern forest. Since Shin was aiming to advance to the depths of the forest, he took the west route near the center part of the northern forest. Trees grew thicker and shut out the daylight as he advanced farther into the forest. The darkness was like the night, and could not be compared to the eastern forest. The heights of the trees alone eclipsed those in the eastern forest, and with the dark and thick atmosphere he felt like it was refusing a person to advance to the its depths.

In fact, the deeper he advanced into the forest, the more Shin thought about not approaching in his mind. It was not perception or foresight. More precisely, there was something that was affecting his consciousness in this place.

(This, is this a barrier?)

Though he was not certain, the more Shin moved forward, the stronger he sensed the intention to obstruct him. It was some kind of protection barrier that was erected.

But the barrier or something was nothing to Shin as he moved rapidly. Even though he was going ahead like it was nothing, to begin with, if it were normal humans, it would not be possible for them to approach the barrier, as the feeling of avoidance increased as they got closer. However, the barrier was not effective against Shin, especially after he put some effort to strengthen against the mind interference system. Rather, it was notifying him 'There is something ahead!'.

Shin walked earnestly toward the direction where the sense was getting stronger while observing his surroundings. None of the monsters appeared because of the effect of the barrier.

He continued walking for a while, and the moment he passed the side of a particularly big tree, the darkness was cleared before his eyes and a soft light gently shined upon Shin.

There was an open space with a diameter of about 30 mels as if it was cut into the ground in a circle. And a bright cinnabar red torii* and a cozy Shinto shrine were built there. (T/N: a Japanese gateway of light construction commonly built at the approach to a Shinto shrine)

“This place is the center of the barrier?”

Because of the mental interference that had been received when he first entered the forest abruptly ended when he set foot in the shrine, he guessed that it was likely he had come off from the barrier effect. Still, he did not think that there would be a Shinto shrine.

“Hmm～?…This Shinto shrine, I think I’ve seen it somewhere before.”

He felt like he remembered that he saw it somewhere before, and tilted his head. The Japanese style architecture was not rare at the time of the game, but there were not many enthusiasts who built a Shinto shrine. He thought that he could remember it instantly, but couldn’t, no matter what.

“For the time being, should I enter first?”

Because it was absurd to agree by himself, he passed through the torii at once and entered the Shinto shrine.

There was a road from the torii, straight to the main shrine. The only buildings were the torii and the main shrine, not even one of the essential parts of a Shinto shrine like guardian lion-dogs, a purifying basin and offertory box were present.

“Did the air change?”

However, the moment he passed through the torii, the air which surrounded Shin changed completely to show that this was a holy place,

although the building was only a main shrine.

Shin's cheek was brushed by a refreshing wind that could make him forget that he was in the middle of a forest. Shin noticed much stronger mixed scents of various creatures that came through the middle of the forest. It made one realize that this was a special place.

Inside the Shinto shrine, it seemed to be well managed as it was not particularly rough. The main shrine had a higher floor, and few decorations. If seen by people who only knew a general Shinto shrine, they would feel uncomfortable.

A moment before Shin arrived at the main shrine, a "pishiri" sound reached his ears.

"What is that?"

It was the sound of something like glass cracking. There was a possibility that a barrier was cracked, he thought. And it was not a nice foreboding.

Is it probably because of me? He looked around, but there was no change in particular in the vicinity. The clear atmosphere didn't change and the sacred air had not weakened either. To begin with, Shin hadn't done anything.

The door of the main shrine was slightly open.

It was somewhat telling him to open it quickly. Though there was no gap for him to look through inside, it was really difficult to ignore his curiosity once he was interested.

"...Should I try to open it?"

While thinking that there was nothing much to say, Shin opened the main shrine door and was exposed to a full view of a gloomy room receiving light from outside.

The letters written on the floor were the first things he saw. The Sanskrit characters-like letters were lined up to form a circle. A big circle was wrapping around several smaller ones, and the appearance of it was just like a magic formation.

And in its center. One figure lay at the middle of the various-sized circles.

"...A fox?"

It was a young fox, which had a silver coat of fur, that was lying down on the floor exhausted, while its body was exposed to light.

"Isn't it carefree being seen like this?"

When he confirmed there was no trap, Shin rushed over to the young fox. There was no visible injury, but the HP gauge of the young fox was in the red zone. Moreover, it was suffering from abnormality states【Poison • X】and【Curse • X】. It was only a matter of time until it ran out of vitality if it was left unattended in this state.

"The fox that Millie mentioned, is it this fox?"

It was certainly not a common fox as it was in a place like this. He would think about it later as it was not the time for it. Shin opened the Item Box from the menu screen, selected the all purpose cure 'Elixir' from the list of items lined in a rows and took it out directly as an item, not the item card. Then he flicked the cap open with his thumb. The full phial of golden liquid could completely restore HP, MP, loss of body parts and remove abnormalities except one portion of it. When he tried to put it to the mouth of the young fox, a crashing sound reached Shin's ears. The loud sound was like a large amount of glasses breaking all at once occurring multiple times in succession.

"What is it now!?"

Shin promptly activated【Sign Perception】and perceived the state of the surroundings.【Sign Perception】was not the same with the monsters only type of detection,【Search】.【Sign Perception】was capable of determining the position of monsters and players within a certain range. The disadvantage to【Search】was its narrow perception range, but it was more effective to investigate an area from the shadows of buildings or obstacles.

Shin confirmed that about roughly 50 monsters or more were approaching the main shrine. Apparently the sound a little while ago looked like the barrier was broken. He could see that red markers surrounded the

main shrine and that the encirclement was gradually shrinking, like ants that gathered around sugar, when he looked at the map.

(Are they aiming for this fox?)

Shin thought while looking at the fox crying “Kuu…” weakly. He made the fox drink the elixir so its abnormals state was cured, and its vitality was smoothly recovered from the red zone to yellow and then green. Though its vitality had recovered, the fox still seemed to be in a weakened state, and a lot of time had passed since Shin restored it to its normal state.

“First, activate【Barrier・Ⅹ】!!”

Shin deployed the highest level barrier before the enemies come closer. A barrier was formed around the main shrine and blocked the march of the red markers, and the enemies crowded outside the barrier.

To be honest, Shin didn’t fully understand the situation yet, but he didn’t even consider the option of abandoning the young fox here. It raised its head while trembling as it watched Shin. The young fox was lowered on the floor where the pattern-like magic formation was drawn, and after its head was patted, Shin stood up.

“Kuu…”

“Wait here a moment. I’m about to kick those intruders.”

He said and turned his back to the young fox and opened the main shrine door to go out. After Shin exited the main shrine, he saw the figures of Skull Faces’ which crowded on the outside of the barrier. They were wearing rusted swords and armor, and the skeleton soldiers had a dim light in hollow eyes, gathering around the barrier like sleepwalkers.

Because the Skull Faces couldn’t break the barrier, Shin calmly took in a view of the whole scene.

“If their quality is bad, then their quantity is endless?”

Shin muttered while looking at the crowd of Skull Faces that extended past his field of vision. An individual with unique equipment and level like the Jack class he fought last time was not found in the crowd of the Skull

Face that were surrounding Shin, it was composed of Pawn class and Jack class that similar to Shin's knowledge.

Shin, who understood that the Skull Face's have surrounded him from【Sign Perception】skill activation, switched to【Search】skill, which could cover a wider area. With the enlarged detection range by focusing only on the monsters as targets, he could pinpoint all of the Skull Faces.

It was the amount that became the problem this time. Thanks to【Search】, he understood that the number of enemies was close to 3 digits. There was a possibility that the Bayreuth kingdom might received the collateral damage again, too, if he let them slip even a little.

It crossed Shin's mind after he saw the pool of blood that spread on the ground and there were barely any human remains nearby. Though he had no intention to put on airs for justice now, it was about the disposition of trying to not deal unnecessary damage.

"You guys are evil. Not one of you will get away from this."

While advancing one step toward them, Shin took out a new weapon from the Item Box. It was a spear which materialized in his hand. The handle shone in silver, the blade was vivid green as if a jade had been attached to the tip. Because magic had been bestowed, the whole spear was wrapped in a white radiance.

He rotated the spear with his right hand once and pointed the tip forward to the crowd of enemies,【Limit】was released to Ⅱ in one breath. He confirmed that his strength was released to a point where he could completely control it, furthermore, his combat abilities efficiency was risen, too. Shin kicked the ground forward and rushed at the crowd of Skull Faces.

"Here is the first blow!!"

Simultaneously, he invoked the spearmanship system martial arts skill, 【Furrow Pierce】 while dashing. The tip of the spear penetrated, by Shin's physical strength, through several Skull Faces in a mass. An emerald green light was generated by the invocation of the skill, while at the same time forming a spiral along with the swords, armor, and Skull Faces spinning together. The Skull Faces were shattered to very small pieces by power rivaling a cannonball that had been fired in a horizontal path, and a furrow was formed made of bones and iron fragments in a straight line.

Shin was able to escape the encirclement of the Skull Faces without changing the momentum of his charge.

"Next one. 【Star Mine】!"

Dozens of light orbs appeared around Shin while he invoked the skill, it was arranged to surround the groups of Skull Face.

Light technique system magic skill, 【Star Mine】. A skill with light attribute that could set up mine-like light orbs in the sky.

The generated light orbs was located further outside of the Skull Face's that surrounded the main shrine, it was to cut off the way of retreat so the Skull Face could not escape into the forest.

After he made sure that the installation of light orbs had been completed, Shin relaunched his attack to the Skull Faces that still gathered around the barrier.

This time it was the skill of the spearmanship system martial arts, 【Spark Blossom】was used. Needless to say, the Skull Faces were shattered when receiving the direct hit from the spear that left a trail of emerald light in a horizontal line. Furthermore, pieces of crushed armor and swords were sent toward the Skull Faces that were outside the spear's range. Those blown off by a single blow from the extraordinary power were Pawn class and Jack class, they were pierced without any regard. The Skull Faces situation were literally like buzzing in beehive.

Although the Skull Faces of Jack class raised their swords and tried to

attack Shin, they were returned by Shin's spear and the fragments of bones and irons became impromptu bullets that pierced their allies.

"Another one!!"

Shin wielded the spear freely with unimaginable speed in one hand. Nearly ten Skull Faces nearby were defeated in one blow when he used the skill. Moreover, the fragments, like a shotgun attack, further decreased the number quickly.

The place was so completely monopolized by Shin, that not even a single Skull Face could survive.

◆◆◆◆

Since Shin started the battle, the group of Skull Faces was completely wiped out in less than ten minutes. The remains of the Skull Faces were scattered in the area around the barrier and the ground couldn't be seen. Because he didn't have any intentions to clean up the remains, he ignored them and pretended he did not see them as he returned to the main shrine.

When he opened the main shrine door and entered inside, a young fox jumped at him as it was waiting for Shin.

"Ku—!!"

"Gee! Th-that's a dangerous thing to do, you."

He almost lost his balance while holding the young fox in arm, he rubbed its head while stepping down from the stairs and stood on the ground. Its physical condition was completely restored, too. The exhausted appearance that had improved since a little while ago was not felt in young fox as it constantly licked Shin's face.

"By the way, what will you do from now on?"

He looked at the surroundings that were in a pitiful state while holding the young fox. In addition, the sacred atmosphere that he sensed until a while ago was not felt. The power protecting the Shinto shrine along with the barrier that broke might have vanished.

“Ku—?”

“Come to think of it, I don’t know much about you yet.”

Although he helped the young fox with the impetus of Millie’s request, unexpectedly, this young fox had a lot of mysteries. When Shin first found the young fox, he was being distracted by its low vitality, and he just noticed that he didn’t even confirm its name yet until now. He only knew that this young fox was a kind of monster, because only players and monsters had an HP gauge in the game.

“I completely forgot to check its name. After all, is it a Little Fox?”

While citing the name of the monster that was popular as a pet, he read the information about the young fox with【Analyze】. While being held by Shin, the young fox looked puzzled, not understanding the meaning of words.

“Uhm, name, nam…e?”

Shin’s gaze stopped at the position of the monster’s name. The name that was written there had gone far above the Shin’s imagination.

“E, Element Tail…seriously…?”

“Ku—!”

As if it totally agreed! The young fox’s reaction showed that it seemed to convey it was an Element Tail. It was no wonder that Shin became stiff. The Element Tail was a monster called Nine Tailed Fox, or Kyuubi among players, and was originally part of the highest class of monsters which boast Lv. 1000 in THE NEW GATE.

It was always in the top in the THE NEW GATE strongest monster ranking chosen by players, and Shin who did not considered the possibility that the name of such monster appeared, cannot help but to be at a loss.

“What should I do?…What should I do, seriously?”

The level of the Element Tail was 211 at the present time when he examined it in detail. It was a level already dangerous enough according to

the residents of this world. It might not have a parents, as it was seen alone. If say incidentally, it was the life of Shin that was in danger. An Element Tail was an opponent that could be said was absurd to be challenged alone even if one were a maxed stats player. Shin might defeat it after releasing all【Limit】, but at least the northern forest would be burnt down to the ground.

"What is an Element Tail doing in a place like this? Just like Arclid…that's it!! That was Element Tail isn't it!!"

The sensed that he had seen it somewhere before when he looked at the Shinto shrine. He remembered the cause and unintentionally raised his voice.

The quest related to the Element Tail of the Shinto shrine composed of only the main shrine and the torii, but it was a place that one went to visit in a.k.a. the Kyuubi quest. Actually there was a detached building separately from the Shinto shrine, but it might have collapsed from a natural disaster. The Shinto shrine itself was probably protected by the barrier that Shin felt. It was not strange even if the Element Tail was here if he thought about it that way.

Anyway, half of the visitors who came to Tsuki no Hokora were players who challenged the Kyuubi quest. In a sense it could be said that Shin was receiving in cooperation with the sales of the store during the game.

Shin understood that there was an Element Tail in this place, but there was the question remain, about what it would do from now on. There was only an adult form of the Element Tail that appeared in the Shinto shrine in the Kyuubi quest originally, and there was no monster such as the young fox.

"You, what do you want to do from now on?"

Though it was not possible to talk, Shin asked because somehow he felt like it understood him. Because a barrier was erected, it was safe, but the thought of leaving a young fox alone even for an Element Tail in this place was unbearable.

"Ku—…"

Though the Element Tail that had been lowered to the ground gazed at the main shrine, after a short time, it shook its body and turned around. Then, the fox jumped skillfully and climbed up Shin's body, and placed itself comfortably on the top of Shin's head.

"Why on top of my head?"

"Ku～!"

"No, I don't understand it."

The Element Tail on the head slapped him "pechipechi". (T/N: light slap sfx) Was this fox's resolve to leave this place?, Shin felt, it somehow was saying that.

"...Do you want to go together?"

"Ku—!"

"Is that so?...Dangerous! Claws! Your claws are painful!"

Shin somehow felt like it was saying: "I'll go!", but the violent behaviour of the happy young fox almost caused him to lose his balance.

Since its claws were not fully retracted, it was difficult for Shin to walk with the young fox scratching his face.

"Calm down!"

"Ku—?"

"What are you tilting your head for? You absolutely understand the meaning of my words!"

Even though it was young, it belonged to the race of the first-class monster Element Tail, there was no way it was not smart. Perhaps it was one of the young fox's ways to distract itself from loneliness.

(You should become a full-fledged Element Tail before I return to the original world)

While thinking about that, Shin advanced toward the kingdom, while preventing scratches from its clawed paws with both of his hands.

Special

THE NEW GATE

After she sent off the last customer, Tiera counted how many of each item were left on the shelves. She had plenty of salves used for healing wounds and class 7 potions, which were classified as high-class potions, left over; probably because these were inconvenient to use. The most popular items at present were the middle-class potions, class 8 and 9 potions. They were reasonably priced and when you go off on an adventure, you want to take at least one.

"We have only two bottles left. I should make more."

She left the 'Please Call Us' sign on the counter and moved to the workshop.

"Hillock herb, purified water and a spoonful of magic stone powder…"

She mixed dried hillock herb with magic stone powder, added clarified water and heated the mixture. When the compound dissolved in the clarified water, it changed color to light blue.

Once she made sure that all the components had dissolved, she poured the solution into a cylindrical container which was around 20 cemels in height and 1 cemel in diameter.

Then all that was left to do was to put a lid on it.

"If it's as easy as this, I might become overconfident with my skills."

She gently sighed while looking at the class 8 potion she had made in only half an hour.

The workshop of Tsuki no Hokora was equipped with the best facilities.

With these facilities, even Tiera who had just recently started to work as an alchemist, rarely failed unless she worked on challenging compounds.

Normally, if she used ordinary tools, it would take a day or more to do the same work.

She had heard of how the alchemists in her homeland had experienced hard times and saw the great works of Schnee, the acting store manager.

That helped her avoid becoming overconfident.

Next, she made a class 9 potion before she was called and then walked back into the store.

“Thank you for waiting.”

“Hi Tiera. Your fur looks great as usual.”

A catman stood at the counter. He was a regular customer.

He liked Tiera and often visited the store. However, while Tiera looked like a catwoman to him, this was just an illusion created by Schnee.

“Sorry, Tiera. Our leader is clinging to you.”

The catwoman spoke with a fed-up look on her face. She belonged to his party and was also a familiar face to Tiera.

Tiera quickly looked around the store, but she didn’t see the other members of his party such as the wolfman or the dwarf.

“Welcome, good customer. Do you want the usual?”

“I have something I’d like to tell you today, Tiera!”

The man looked serious, while Tiera just showed a business like smile. “Again…” Tiera muttered to herself.

In her homeland, she had been famous for her beauty. Elves are generally beautiful but she was outstanding even for an elf.

Since she started working for the store, Tsuki no Hokora, she had often been approached by men.

Since she always rejected them, there were fewer suitors that approached her. Nevertheless, some like this catman still tried.

“I’m sorry but I will still not accept you. You are more like a younger brother to me.”

Elves have much longer lifespans than beasts.

In fact, Tiera had known him ever since he was a greenhorn adventurer. Although he grew into an experienced adventurer, she still felt as if he was just like a naughty little brother.

He was disappointed by her answer. The catwoman tapped his shoulder and said, “You see? I told you.”

Officially, her reason for rejecting them was that as a resident of Tsuki no Hokora she didn’t want to bother Schnee by having a relationship with someone.

In reality though, she was afraid that she would expose them to danger. She was cursed and accordingly strong monsters were attracted to her. Normal adventurers would be overwhelmed by them. Only someone like Schnee could deal with the monsters she attracted.

She never wanted to be in the situation where someone was injured or killed because of her. Above all, she feared their reactions, when they discovered that she was a cursed girl who attracted monsters.

She was still haunted by the sad memory of how the people in her homeland had treated her like a monster 50 years ago.

“Sigh….”

She leaned on the counter and looked out of the window.

There were no clouds in the sky and the sun shone down on the trees.

Tiera went out for a change.

Closing her eyes, she soaked up the sunlight and felt the wind on her cheeks. It made her smile slightly.

Leaving the door open, she opened her eyes but soon she looked down at the ground.

Between Tsuki no Hokora and the forest surrounding it was the boundary of the spiritual barrier that protected the store. It was a

boundary for Tiera, too.

If she stepped outside of the barrier, she couldn't predict what kind of monster would appear. Furthermore, whichever monster appeared it would attack her without reason.

She sighed and moved back towards Tsuki no Hokora. Though the border was a bit further, so she could have gone farther, her feet refused to move forward.

"Well, I will make some sweets."

She decided to make some sweets to forget unpleasant things.

Her sweets are one of the most popular items of the store. She reminded herself that she had to make them as replacements anyway and went to the kitchen.

She measured ingredients, kneaded, baked, wrapped them with a plastic bag, and then closed the bag with a ribbon.

There were few sweets in this world, her sweet that contained honey called "Cayfal", which Schnee called financier, was popular with both men and women.

Some adventurers who have kids came to the store only to buy Cayfal.

"Good, now I should place these on the shelf."

She felt happy whenever she thought about those who told her how much they enjoy it.

Even without magical power, it made her happy that she could make someone smile.

"Oop, I have to take care of the store."

It seemed that nobody came while she made the sweets. But that didn't mean she could leave the store unattended.

She reflected, she had focused too much on making sweets, so she sat on

a chair at the counter.

At that moment, as if it were scheduled, the door opened.

Tiera saw an armored man from Bayreuth Kingdom. After she heard his story, she decided to notify Schnee.

Dealing with customers, managing items and trying to improve her skills in the workshop, she just repeated this day after day. While she seemed to repeat the same thing every day, no day was exactly the same as any other.

Days while she waited for Schnee to find a way to break her curse, days when she saw one person after another while the seasons changed. Tiera didn't realize that these ordinary days would soon come to an end.

Status

THE NEW GATE

Name : **Shin**

Gender : **Male**

Race : **High Human**

Main Job : **Samurai**

Sub Job : **Blacksmith**

Adventures' Rank : **C**

Affiliated Guild : **Rokuten**

● Stats

LV :	255
HP :	22832
MP :	21349
STR :	2225
VIT :	2017
DEX :	2170
AGI :	2236
INT :	2032
LUC :	36

● Equipment

Head : Dark Kings Muffler

Torso : Dark Kings Long Coat

Arms : Dark Kings Arm Guards

Legs : Dark Kings Leg Guards

Accessory 1 : Dark Kings Ring

Accessory 2 : Age of Gods Earring

Weapon : True Moon (Original Handmade Ruby Katana)

● Titles

- Limit Breaker
- Accomplished
- Liberator
- Legendary Blacksmith
- Master of the Blade

etc

● Skills

- Mountain Cleaver
- Moon Arc: Thunder Flash
- Sanctuary
- Mind's Eye
- Shukuchi

etc

Other

- First player to reach capped stats.
- Manager of Tsuki no Hokora.
- Death Game Liberator.

Name : Tiera Lucent

Gender : Female

Race : Elf

Main Job : **Alchemist**

Sub Job : **None**

Adventures' Rank : **None**

● Stats

LV :	57
HP :	860
MP :	1400
STR :	75
VIT :	46
DEX :	65
AGI :	61
INT :	77
LUC :	60

● Equipment

Head : None

Torso : Jacket of Crystal Green Threads

Arms : Armband of Silver Steel (+VIT)

Legs : Long Boots of Haste (+STR)

Accessories : Earrings of White Augite (+LUC)

Weapon : Short Bow of Magic Tree

● Titles

- Mage Apprentice

● Skills

- Analyze

Other

- Salesclerk of Tsuki no Hokora.
- "Analyze" Skill holder.
- Former "Cursed Gift" holder.

Name : **Barlux Heim**

Gender : **Male**

Race : **Human**

Main Job : **Fist Fighter**

Sub Job : **Berserker**

Adventures' Rank : **None** ***(Former S)***

● Stats

LV :	228
HP :	4190
MP :	2770
STR :	391
VIT :	322
DEX :	345
AGI :	397
INT :	290
LUC :	77

● Equipment

Head : None

Torso : Light Blue Crystal Armour (+AGI)

Arms : Blue Fang Gauntlet

Legs : Dragon Skin Boots (Bind Reduction)

Accessories : Jade Amulet (Debuff Reduction)

Weapon : Blue Fang Gauntlet (Phys Attack Reflect)

● Titles

- None

● Skills

- Steel Repel
- Sign Perception
- Spirit Manipulation

Other

- Guild Master of Bayreuths Adventures' Guild.

Name : Wilhelm Avis

Gender : Male

Race : Lord

Main Job : **Spearman**

Sub Job : **None**

Adventures' Rank : **A**

● Stats

LV :	188
HP :	5800
MP :	4200
STR :	513
VIT :	327
DEX :	381
AGI :	490
INT :	282
LUC :	55

● Equipment

Head : None

Torso : Steel Silk Battle Attire

Arms : Dragon Scale Gauntlet (+VIT, Fire Resistance)

Legs : Dragon Scale Boots (Bind Reduction)

Accessories : None

Weapon : Devil Spear Venom (HP Drain)

● Titles

- Wielder of the Devil Spear

● Skills

- Spark Blossom
- Calamity Drilling Thrust
- Sign Perception
- Spirit Manipulation

Other

- Holder of the legendary Devil Spear "Venom".

Name : Skull Face (Unique)

Classs : Jack

Race : Undead

● Stats

LV :	359
HP :	3570
MP :	350
STR :	330
VIT :	377
DEX :	239
AGI :	201
INT :	88
LUC :	20

● Equipment

Weapon : Holy Sword Muspelm

● Titles

- Wielder of the Holy Sword

● Skills

- None

Other

- Unique Monster.
- Holder of the legendary Holy Sword "Muspelm".

Credits

THE NEW GATE

Translation [Shin Translations]

eBook & Typesetting [Olivki]

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